1970 - 1979

1980 - 1989

1990 - 1999

1970 - 1979

T. C. Smith Drug Co.

FEB 15 1970 A - CITIZEN

Celebrates 100 Years

Man's long search for the cure to what ails him was detailed Saturday by Asheville Citizen Times author-columnist John Parris at the 100th anniversary celebration of Dr. T. C. Smith Co., a local drug firm, in the Asheville Downtown City Club.

Parris was the featured speaker of the occasion.

"There is a plant in the world for every ailment," Parris said. "All you have to do is find it."

Parris said this was the core of wisdom of an old mountain man, a herb doctor, he once knew.

Boiled toads for dropsy may sound like black magic, but the toads are now known to contain alkaloids having marked diuretic properties," the writer said.

He noted that an old folk cure for malaria was to swallow a ball of spider webs rolled in quinine.

This is not as far fetched as it sounds either. In 1882 a substance called arachnidin was isolated from spider webs which proved to be a remarkable medicine for reducing fever," Parris said.

Parris noted that the greates number of Cherokee Indian remedies were of vegetable origin, for both internal and external application. He said the early mountain women claimed that Indians first gave them their knowledge of the medicinal value the woods around them held.

"It was mountain men, however, who decided that 'yarbs hain't nary bit of use without jest a least grain of whisky," Parris said.

Parris explained that to know why the Chinese hold ginseng in such high regard, the ancient 'doctrine of signatures" must be understood. It is at the root of almost all primitive medicines he said.

In its simplest form, Parris said, the cure for cardiac trouble would lie within a plant with a heart-shaped leaf. A common wild flower named hepatica, with its liver-shaped leaf, was used for hepatic ailments.

A little orchid, he said, the rattlesnake plantain, with net-veined leaves, looks enough like a snakeskin to suggest that it may be a "rattlesnake master." Also the black cohosh, which has a spike of button-like seed-pods, looks like an uplifted rattle snake tail.

Prior to the writer's address, F. Stacy Smith, president of the firm and grandson of the founder, gave a brief history of the company.

According to the president, his grandfather T. C. Smith finished medical school after service as a medical steward in the Confederate Army and accepted employment with a firm rather than practicing medicine. Later he returned south and set up his own business in Charlotte. Still later he was influenced by Col. Frank Coxe, builder of the original Battery Park Hotel, to come to Asheville.

Employes, friends and customers of the firm and members of the family were included in Saturday's celebration.

Asheville Citizen February 15, 1970

APR 29 1970

Eliada Home Gets Its Pool

A-CITIZEN

Radio Station WWNC's trading stamp drive to obtain 5,000 books of stamps to purchase a swimming pool for Eliada Home for Children went over the top and a contract for construction of the pool was signed Tuesday. At the signing ceremonies, after which the station turned over the 5,000 books Sheppard, president of Asheville Pool and Gunite Corp., contractors for the pool; standing: Claude Freeman, WWNC station manager, Mrs. Cora Wilson, WWNC receptionist and caretaker of the stamp books, Ed Swann, vice chairman of the board of Eliada, and Arch Cameron, Eliada Home director.

ELIADA HOME FOR CHILDREN

P. O. Box 6337
Asheville, North Carolina 28806
Telephone - 254-5356

Director: Mr. Arch Cameron Campus Life Director: Rev. William Rees

Governed by a revolving Board of Trustees consisting of 15 local citizens. Eliada Home is an interdenominational faith organization, deriving its support from the contributions of individuals throughout the nation. The Home is licensed by the North Carolina Department of Social Services.

Capacity: 90-100 children. Boys and girls above 2 years of age.

Intake Policies: Eliada encourages placement of family groups, ie., brothers and sisters together, and discourages any placement for less than two years. Write to the director for an application blank, giving general picture of child's situation. Upon receipt of the completed application blank, accompanied by a social history and evidence of the child's academic progress, the case is then reviewed and a decision is made. Parents are urged to correspond and visit with the children and to accept some responsibility for clothing, etc., as seems advisable. A child is permitted to remain at Eliada until his home situation again becomes adequate or until he has been equipped to assume adult responsibility.

Location: Situated on the New Leicester Highway, Eliada Home consists of 300 acres of Farm and wood land providing the children ample opportunity for exercise, fresh air and sunshine. With its own school, dairy, farm, camp conference grounds, gymnasium, lake and recreation fields, Eliada affords a well-rounded program of social, educational, spiritual and physical activities. Visitors are welcomed.

6/70

THU SEP 17 1970

New Club Banner

The West Asheville Business Association was presented an official banner, designed and painted by Mrs. Ruth G. Suehr of Fayetteville, a professional artist, at a Ladies Night meeting in the Governor's Western Residence on Patton Mountain Tuesday. Receiving the banner was (left) Albert Fortune, president, accompanied by Mrs. Fortune. At right are Richard C. Suehr, publicity chairman, and Mrs. Suehr. (Staff Photo by June Glenn Jr.)

Asheville Citizen September 17, 1970

THE ASHEVILLE CITIZEN, Wed., Oct. 7, 1970

New Clothing Store To Open

Byrd's Inc., a new "family type clothing store," has been given a tentative opening date of Nov. 1 by its owner, Grady Byrd Jr., of Asheville.

The new business at 805 Patton Ave., was chartered Aug. 1 under the state's articles of incorporation by Bryd, son of Grady Byrd Sr. who opened Efird's Department Store here in 1928.

Byrd is organizer, president and manager. His wife, the former Margaret Freeman of Asheville, is secretary.

The 10,000-square-foot store, which Byrd envisions as the first of several in the Asheville area, will be housed in a new one-story brick building constructed by H. M. Rice and Sons of Weaverville. J. Bertram King of Asheville was architect.

Construction has been completed and the building is now being stocked for the opening in time for the Christmas shopping season, Byrd said.

Initially, the store will be staffed by eight to 10 employes and will feature clothing for men and women. Plans call for the stock to be expanded next spring to include children's wear.

Byrd said the store will offer nationally advertised brand names in the medium price range.

Byrd prefers to call his business a family clothing store.

"It will not be a specialty shop nor a department store in the traditional sense although specialized service will be provided at moderate prices on family clothes," Byrd said.

Previously, Byrd was associated with Belk stores, having joined the Belk-Hudson stores in Spartanburg, S. C., following his graduation from Wofford College there.

Later he worked for Belk stores in Birmingham, Ala., and in 1964 returned to Asheville where he became assistant manager and merchandise manager for Belk.

He is a member of the Asheville Lions Club and resides with his wife and three children at 19 Brookside Rd.

Asheville Citizen October 7, 1970

THE ASHEVILLE TIMES
Asheville, N. C. Wednesday, October 7, 1970 Section Three

Zoning Board's Ruling Involving P.O. Reversed

Superior Court Judge Fred H. Hasty yesterday reversed a decision by the Asheville Zoning Board of Adjustment that would have closed part of the West Asheville Post Office because of a zoning violation by the builder.

The decision followed a hearing in Buncombe County Superior Court on the certified record of the board's quasi-judicial action.

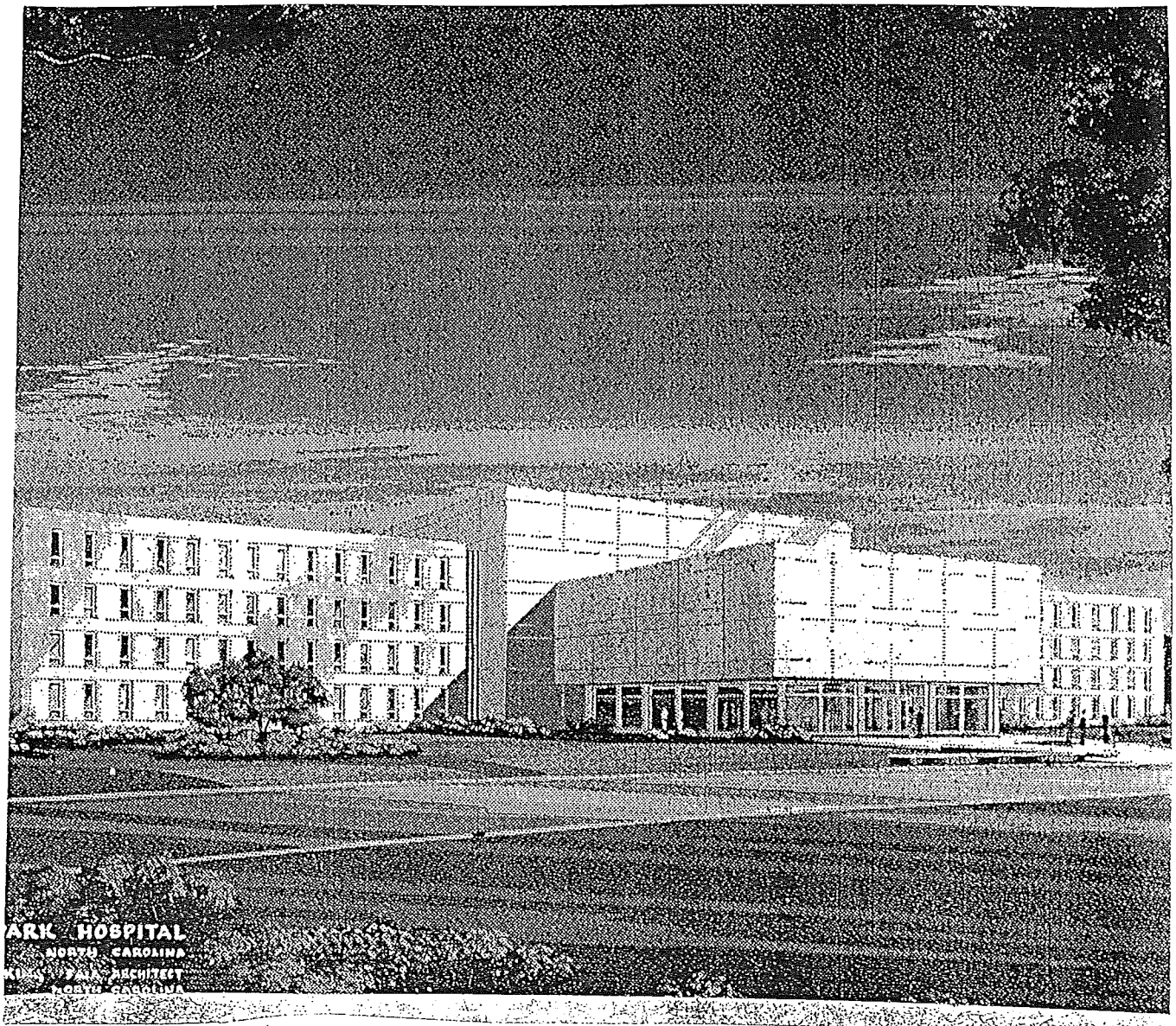
"I don't believe justice would demand that use of the building be discontinued," the judge said. He asked William White, attorney for residents of the area, whether it was reasonble to knock out the whole building because of one corner.

Records show that a survey made in 1969, more than four years after the Post Office Annex was built, showed about 37 feet of the loading platform was in a residential zone.

"We do not contest the survey," George Ward Hendon, attorney for the builder, R. L. Coleman, said. "But after $125,000 was spent and a 40 to 50 year lease made, the city board cannot now say 'you're lapping over the line.'"

Judge Hasty said it was strange that a city would issue a building permit for a building and then say tear it down.

Residents of the neighborhood complained that Post Office trucks use Druid Drive, a residential street, on their way to and from Patton Avenue, endangering their children and filling the air with noise and exhaust fumes.



Architect's Rendering Of $3.4 Million, 120-Bed Aston Park Hospital Planned For West Asheville's Rhododendron Park.

Asheville Citizen October 8, 1970

Proposed Aston Park Hospital To Stress Quality Care

Plans for the new Aston Park Hospital, to be built in Rhododendron Park, contemplate the preservation of a tradition — an atmosphere of warm personal interest in the individual care of patients.

"The building will be new," said J. F. Pearson, Aston Park's administrator, "but we expect to maintain the same quality in our relationship with patients that has given us a unique place in the community."

OCT 8 - 1970

Pearson said the new building will be designed to accommodate the type of services which the hospital firmly believes to be a vital portion of the "prescription" for each patient.

During a fund-raising campaign beamed at potential contributors not pledged to the Tri-Hospital Growth Fund, the hospital already has raised $95,000 of the $500,000 needed in local funds for the $3.4 million plan.

Asheville CITIZEN

The new plant will continue its role as a general hospital with facilities for 50 surgical and medical patients and will increase its services by providing also 50 extended care beds and beds for 20 patients in need of treatment for alcoholism and drug abuse.

The extended care facility will be designed for the recuperative care of those persons recovering from surgery or debilitating diseases who are still in need of professional care but are not ill enough to require the strict supervision and care of the acutely ill. Pearson said a certain amount of self-care by the patients is visualized.

The alcoholic unit will be patterned on recommendations of Dr. Richard Bates of Sparrow Hospital in East Lansing, Mich., visited by members of the Aston Park board and staff last fall. It is anticipated that many persons in this unit will be referred to the Alcoholic Rehabilitation Center at Black Mountain following their detoxification. The unit, Pearson said, should be a contribution of considerable impact to this general region, as well as the immediate community.

With its new facility, Pearson said, Aston Park intends to supplement and complement the medical community. There will be provisions for out-patients, limited emergency cases and the usual hospital functions such as surgery, coronary care units and intensive care units, as well as laboratory, physical therapy and X-ray facilities.

According to J. Bertram King, architect for the new structure, the present plan is for practically all rooms to be potentially semi-private. Nevertheless, he said, each semi-private room can provide much privacy for each of the two beds when desired, due to a partition which can be pulled the length of the bed and across the foot of each, closing off the two portions of the room. Each semi-private room will have a shower, bathroom and two sinks.

The nursing units will be arranged 32 beds to a floor with a double corridor scheme, including the nursing desk and service and utility rooms in the center, opening on both sides to the corridors.

Plans call for three wings, a five-floor patient care wing which will include a cafeteria in the basement, a two-floor administrative wing, and a three-floor service wing, including a basement, to house all service departments.

The three wings will be linked together by a central lobby and elevator area. The first floor of the patient care wing will provide for treatment of 32 extended care and self care patients.

The second floor will have its own dining area and will house 16 extended care patients and 16 alcoholic and drug patients. The third and fourth floors will each handle 32 general acute medical and surgical patients.

Asheville Citizen October 8, 1970

N.C. - Asheville - Eliada home for children 11/14/70

Lions Burn Note For Eliada Cottage

Dr. Robert D. McCullough, of Tulsa, Okla., president of Lions International, told approximately 450 Lions at a note burning celebration at Eliada Home Friday night that the dignity of man is the greatest need of the world.

The occasion was the burning of the mortgage note on the $75,000 cottage for boys at Eliada Home, recently constructed by Lion members of District 31-A.

Using the theme, "Attitudes and Action," Dr. McCullough said that Lionism has embraced the proper use of both of these from the beginning.

"In Lionism, attitude means compassion and action means the important outreach or actually doing something about solving the problems of our fellow man.

"The Lions of Western North Carolina," he said, "not only saw the need at Eliada; they got busy and did something about it. They had a heart for homeless kids."

McCullough pointed to the vast influence of some 934,000 Lions in 146 countries of the free world, saying that he had chosen for the year's theme, "Involvement Now." This, he said, embodies "the spirit of men to solve men's problems and not become a part of them." Lions, he said, stand ready everywhere to take action for world betterment.

"Multiply the work that has been done here in Western North Carolina at Eliada by the work of 492 districts throughout the world and you can envision the tremendous effort, the beautiful brotherhood of spirit of Lionism."

McCullough termed government aid programs a failure, saying "We have shared what we have but not what we are."

Giving his impressions of the area, Dr. McCullough said WNC does not have the deep-seated problems of other hastily and densely populated cities of the North and East, but predicted that the local area will have them in the near future, and he said, the area must be ready.

William M. Staudenmaier of Hendersonville, governor of District 31-A, presided at the dinner meeting.

Dr. McCullough's visit here, the first official visit by an international Lions president, was made to honor Lions of the district who gave thousands of hours of time to the Eliada

F. Gudger Cabe, chairman of the Eliada Home committee, contributed 2,000 hours of physical labor in construction of the cottage and spent another 1,000 hours promoting the project throughout District 31-A.

Approximately $45 a member in cash, labor and building supplies was contributed by the 1,600 Lions in the district.

Initiated and completed within a two-year period, the project is the largest single undertaking ever attempted by the district.

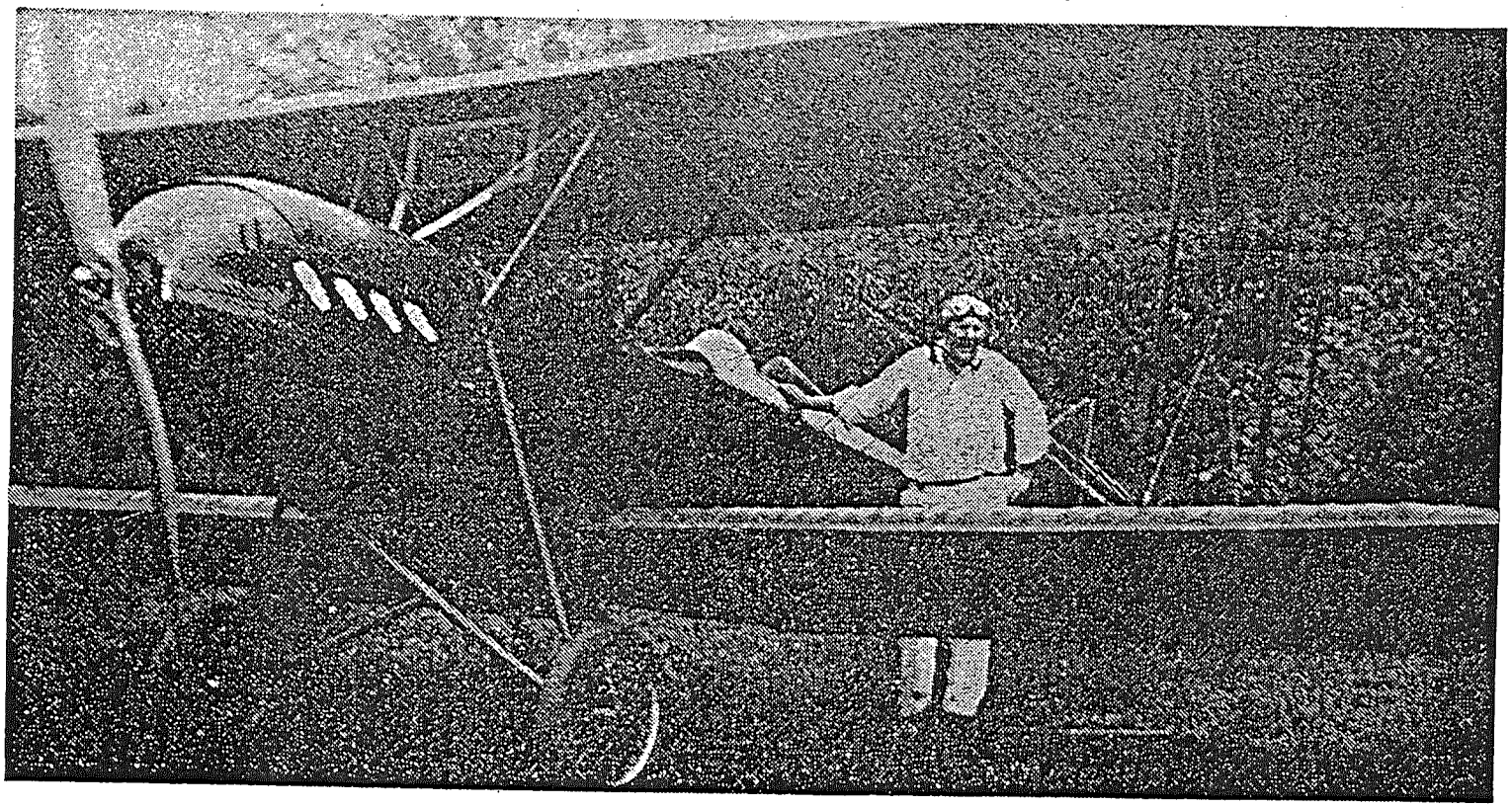
CITIZEN
NOV 14 1970
PACK MEMORIAL PUBLIC LIBRARY
ASHEVILLE, N.C.

Dust-Clouding The Issue

WED DEC 16 1970

It's a dusty business living on this two-block section of Florida Avenue in West Asheville according to resident Glenn Anders. Anders keeps putting up this sign but somebody—Anders thinks it's police and city work crews—keeps tearing it down. Public Works Director Philip C. Cocke Jr. said the sign should not be on the right-of-way, but he doesn't know who has been removing it. Anders said he tried last year to get the city to pave the street. but was told he would need a petition signed by a majority of the owners of more than 50 per cent of abutting property. There are six houses on the street, but most of the land is undeveloped and Anders said he can't locate the owners. City Manager Phin Horton said the city has sprayed chemicals on the street in an effort to keep the dust down, but the city cannot properly initiate the paving and he knows of no specific way under the law to solve the problem. (Staff Photo by Malcolm Gamble.)

Asheville Citizen December 16, 1970



Aviation's Good Old Days

A-C 5/23/71

Aviation has changed a lot since Paul McMurry, president of A & H Flying Service, stood in helmet and goggles beside a three-place open cockpit Waco biplane with a Curtiss OX-5 engine on Carrier Field in 1927. The planes of that day had no brakes and no stering tailwheels, only a few had enclosed cabins, and all had to be flown every second, especially on take-offs and landings. Today's planes are more comfortable, quieter, and much easier to fly. McMurray is still active in aviation, operating A & H at Asheville Airport. He began his fixed base operation in 1936 when the old Asheville-Hendersonville Airport had only a single grass runway. (Paul McMurray Photo)

Asheville Citizen May 22, 1971

BOB TERRELL

JUN 4 1971 The CITIZEN

A Quiet, Restful Place

Old graveyards are intriguing. You can read things on tombstones that can't be found in the pages of a book.

Part of the fascination of studying old gravestones is the atmosphere: the fact that you're standing on consecrated ground—in a forgotten field, perhaps, where bodies have lain undisturbed for a century.

BOB TERRELL

The thought is almost absurd. In these days of hurry, hurry, hurry, of disregard for things personal, of mountain-moving as civilization spreads its asphalt and concrete tentacles into the coves and valleys, it is difficult to fathom a place in which a person might lie in peace for eternity.

It is so especially in the midst of the city, but in West Asheville is such a place—possibly not a place where a man can spend eternity, because of civilization's deeper encroachments, but a plot in which many have rested these last hundred years and more.

It's almost a forgotten field, and it stands within a stone's throw of busy Patton Avenue, the bustling, teeming lifeline of the city.

From the south edge of the old Jarrett Cemetery you can spit down a man-made precipice and into the parking lot of Ingle's supermarket on the corner of Patton Avenue and the Leicester Highway.

They Knew Not The Wonders . . .

There lie folks who traveled by horseback or, more likely, by foot, to whom oxen furnished the ultimate in pulling power, folks who never heard of the California gold rush or the Civil War because they died before those historical events came to pass.

Some of these folks never saw a railroad train or an electric light. But they knew love and life, however harsh. . . laughter and tears . . . and violence.

There lies J. S. Ledford, a United States marshal, an honorable man. His tombstone tells the violent story of his end: "J. S. Ledford, son of J. M. and E. R. Ledford. Was born in Ten. July 7, 1847, and killed by a band of highway murderers in the presence of two hundred people at Landrum's Station, Spartanburg County, S. C., June 12, 1877. Died (in) 46 minutes. Prayed the Lord to have mercy on him."

Yes, have mercy on a good man dying of a bullet in the belly. . . They brought him home face down across his saddle.

There lies John George Miller. His tombstone reads simply; "January 8, 1804; May 10, 1857." Times were harsh, and men died young. Women lived longer. Some did, anyway. John George Miller's wife was put to rest beside him in 1879.

Forgotten Graves

"Here's the oldest grave with a date on it," said Frank Kiser, who drove me up the narrow auto path from Patton Avenue to the cemetery. It was the grave of M. C. Jarrett whose tombstone reads: "B. F. 9, 1755. D. F. 19, 1850." I assume that he lived from February 9, 1755, to February 19, 1850, and died 10 days after his 95th birthday, proving that all men didn't die young.

But farther over, we found an even older grave. The marker, half buried, came out of the soft ground easily. It was inscribed: "John H., son of R & E Miller, died Dec. 7, 1840. AE 15 y's 9 m's & 25 d's. Was killed by a log." Exactly 101 years before Pearl Harbor.

One tombstone, cut from a flat piece of rock, was shaped in the form of a head. It bore only the initials H. M. Many other graves were marked with field stone at the head and foot, rocks that are pock-marked from bullets fired by those who have used them for targets, but which bear no inscription and give no hint of who rests there in forgotten graves.

A few of the graves aren't old and aren't forgotten. Some were buried there as late as 1969.

"That was after we cleaned off the cemetery," Frank Kiser said. "This was a jungle. I had an aunt whose relatives were buried here and she wanted it cleaned off but died before it could be done. I thought if it meant that much to her I would see that it was done, so we cleaned it.

"This is the oldest graveyard in West Asheville," he added thoughtfully.

Indeed, some of the early settlers of West Asheville rest there. And they rest well. Despite the nearby bustle of the city, this is a quiet and peaceful place.

Asheville Citizen June 4, 1971

New 200-Bed, $6.8 Million Aston Park Hospital Slated

A - CITIZEN SEP 17 1971

By MARY COWLES
Citizen Staff Writer

Ground will be broken within 60 days for a new 200-bed Aston Park Hospital to be built in Rhododendron Park, West Asheville, for an estimated $6.8 million.

The announcement was made Thursday by Harold Borchert, chairman of the Aston Park Board of Trustees, who said construction will be financed through a combination of borrowed money and donations.

Borchert said arrangements have been made with a large New York financial house to cover all requirements in excess of loans which can be made by local institutions.

"This is a monumental day for us and a significant day in the history of health care for our whole area," Borchert said.

He said ground breaking ceremonies are slated for mid-November and bids will be let for the new hospital in March, with the opening expected some time late in 1973.

Borchert said duplication of services will be avoided where the services are currently being performed adequately by Asheville's two other general hospitals. He said Aston Park intends to construct what would be classified as a general hospital with most functions normal to a modern health institution being provided.

One of the innovations is that all rooms will be private.

"This is the latest in good hospital care," Borchert said, "and continues our hospital's tradition of providing a very special kind of care and attention to our patients. But it is not only a matter of greater efficiency; private rooms help in the promotion of human dignity and in the end, this means better care."

Assisting Aston Park Hospital with its long range planning is Dr. Roger Rothrock of Rothrock and Co., a firm which has offices in New York, Chicago and San Francisco.

Rothrock is considered one of the world's leading authorities on hospital planning, Borchert said, and his firm is working on health care programs across the country, including the $150 million Queens Hospital medical complex in New York, and projects in 22 countries outside the United States.

In his report to the board of trustees, Dr. Rothrock pointed out that a significant deficit in conforming hospital beds now exists in the area served by Aston Park Hospital.

"There is absolutely no question at all," Dr. Rothrock said, "that there is great need for the type of program you are planning for the new Aston Park. Your beds will be filled, and within a short period, you will probably have to consider an expansion program."

Dr. Rothrock currently is working with local architect J. Bertram King in the final plans and design for the new hospital.

"What shall be developed," Rothrock said, "is the most effective, the most efficient, the most modern hospital in the nation. The best part about all of this," he continues, "is that this kind of planning does not cost you any more. There are no frills, no fancy trims, no extras. We want the very best and the very latest, but at no extra costs. I believe we have been able to achieve this thus far in our planning for Aston Park. What has been developed is a totally economic, feasible and functional program."

The new general hospital will be built on the 69-acre site in Rhododendron Park, given to the hospital in 1967 by long-term friends of the institution.

"It is a beautiful site, a magnificent tract of land," Borchert said. Rothrock in his report concurred with this evaluation. He noted that the land is located in a growing section of the service area of the hospital. Another added feature is the ease of parking and traffic flow.

J. F. Pearson, administrator of Aston Park Hospital, said "we all take considerable satisfaction in knowing that a New York lending institution thinks so highly of our plans and our concept that they are willing to give us such backing. It is an exciting day in the history of Aston Park."

The board of trustees will continue its evaluation of plans for the new hospital. Architect King said that as much as possible all work on the project will be done locally.

"This is going to be a hospital for our people, by our people," he said.

King and representatives of the board's building committee are planning visits to other new hospitals of the same size across the country. Currently plans are for visits to Long Island, San Francisco and Miami to view and evaluate award-winning hospitals.

"We're terribly excited," Borchert said. "We have at last taken our first giant step toward the long-awaited new hospital.

"It's a bold move and the best part of it is that we have never been more determined or felt as right about our decision. We are committed to providing the very best in health care in this area and what we are planning is a totally patient-oriented hospital.

"We are all pleased about being able to join our other two very fine sister institutions, Memorial Mission and St. Joseph's, in making a significant contribution to the health care of the area.

"The one aspect we do not intend to lose in all of this," Borchert said, " is the ingredient which has made our reputation: personal and attentive care for each patient. Everything we have planned in the new facility, including its overall size, is done with the single thought of better care."

Asheville Citizen September 17, 1971

BOB TERRELL

OCT 30 1971

A CITIZEN

A Generation's End

The burial of Miss Minnie Hackney Friday marked the end of an era — or at least the end of a generation of the Hackney family, which played a great role in local history, producing the first city manager of Asheville.

She was the last of nine children of William N. and Teresa Buttrick Hackney, who migrated to America from England in 1889 so their sons could become landowners and carve good lives for themselves.

BOB TERRELL

The sons were mostly in their teens at the time. Hackney was a tenant farmer in Trumfleet, England, and his sons had begun serving as apprentices in various trades, but, according to Miss Mable Starnes, a daughter of one of the Hackney girls, they could not own property in England because they were not of royal heritage.

The sons decided to come to America, and their father said, "We'll go together," so the entire family came by boat to New York and by train to Asheville where Mrs. Hackney's brother, James Buttrick, had a large house in Emma. They lived with him until their own house was built on Louisiana Avenue, the first house on the left off Haywood Road. It still stands.

They Peeled A Watermelon

When the Hackneys arrived in New York, all of Mr. Hackney's money was English. He had it changed into American dollars but had no idea how to count it. When he purchased railroad tickets to Asheville for his family, he held out all his money to the ticket agent and said, "Take what belongs to you."

In Asheville, as soon as they moved into their new home, the family encountered another problem. Someone gave them a watermelon. They'd never seen one before. So they peeled it. They said later that they had an awful time peeling that watermelon and when they finally got it peeled, it tasted terrible. They ate the rind.

One of the Hackney sons, George, became Asheville's first city manager in 1933 under Mayor Wickes Wamboldt. He was also one of the founders of the YMCA here and helped organize the Asheville Retail Merchants Association.

The other Hackney boys moved away, William to Greenville, S. C., where he became a merchant, Fred to Lexington to enter the furniture business, and Percy to Hialeah, Fla., where he bought and operated a vegetable farm.

Terrie was the only one of the five Hackney girls who married. She married George H. Starnes, and all their children went into religious work. Nane Starnes, who pastored the West Asheville Baptist Church for 35 years, was perhaps the most prominent one. He is now doing missionary work in Japan.

Religious Families

Terrie's four sisters led active lives. Kate became a missionary to China for 30 years. She was in charge of a girls school in Soochow. She left that country when the Japanese invaded in the late 1930s.

Amy became a children's worker for the Methodist Church in North Carolina, and Nell and Minnie were nurses. Both were graduated in the first nurses class at Memorial Mission Hospital in 1933 and both served more than 50 years as registered nurses here.

It was a trait of the families that all of the Hackneys and the Starnes went into religious work in one form or another.

"The characteristics of the Hackney and Starnes families ran hand in hand," Mable Starnes said. "All the Starnes boys became deacons or preachers and Sunday School superintendents, and all the Hackneys were deeply religious and closely allied with church work in their home towns."

The Hackney and Buttrick names have been prominent in England for centuries.

"My grandmother, Teresa Buttrick, grew up in Epworth, England," Miss Starnes said. "That was the home of John and Charles Wesley. John Wesley was the father of the Methodist Church. He used to preach in my great-great-grandmother's kitchen. My grandmother was baptized from the same font the Wesleys were. She grew up in the reign of Queen Victoria and was profoundly influenced in her ideals and personal conduct by her queen, whom she greatly admired and devoutly loved. She spent the formative years of her life in the Methodist circles in this intensely Wesleyan environment which undoubtedly influenced the upbringing of her children."

The passing of Miss Minnie Hackney at the age of 90 ends that generation, but the Hackney family will be remembered. It made a mark on the history of Asheville.

Asheville Citizen October 30, 1971

CITIZEN

NOV 19 1971

View Of Proposed Aston Park Complex

Rhododendron Park, site of the proposed new $6.8 million Aston Park Hospital for which groundbreaking ceremonies are scheduled for 2 p. m. Sunday, lies between U. S. Highway 91 and Interstate 40 and can be reached by the Brevard Road exit of both highways. The public has been invited to the ceremonies and the reception to follow, and special invitations have been sent to members of hospital's active and associate medical staffs, representatives of all area hospitals, city and county officials, representatives of the local regional and state planning agencies and contributors to the hospital fund drive.

Hospital Groundbreaking Sunday

Aston Park Hospital's board of trustees will bring years of planning to a climax at 2 p. m. Sunday with a groundbreaking ceremony for its proposed new $6.8 million hospital at Rhododendron Park in Asheville.

U. S. Rep. Roy A. Taylor will be the key speaker and Dr. Roger Rothrock of New York City, whose consulting firm recently completed a feasibility study and 10-year master plan for the hospital, also will participate in the program. Taylor will be introduced by Mayor Richard Wood. Invocation will be given by the Rev. John Knight, pastor of Calvary Baptist Church.

The general public has been invited to the ceremony and to the reception which will follow in the National Guard Armory, across Brevard Road from the site.

Parking will be available for approximately 200 cars on the site itself, and any overflow parking will be provided at the armory, according to J. F. Pearson, hospital administrator.

The proposed new hospital would provide 50 beds to replace those already in existence and 150 new general beds for the treatment of varying levels of care, including extended and intensive care.

Pearson said the master plan recommends that Aston Park Hospital construct a doctors' office building on the grounds with provisions for expansion as additional physicians wish to locate near the hospital.

Also under consideration, he said, is the possibility of developing a separate nursing home or extended care facility on the location, and a day care center for children has been advocated. Ample parking will be available free of charge on the 69-acre site, Pearson said.

In order to give patients the best quality care on an individual and personal basis, all rooms will be private, he said, and room rates will be comparable with semi-private rates in the area.

Approximately $1.5 million in equipment and furniture will be leased for the new hospital, Pearson said, and 280 additional employes will be hired.

Asheville Citizen November 19, 1971

Aston Park Ceremonies Held

A - CITIZEN NOV 22 1971

Medical Gains Foreseen

By JOHN C. DILLS
Citizen Staff Writer

Rep. Roy A. Taylor Sunday predicted great medical progress in future years, and said that the progress "which will be crowded into the next 25 years may surpass all other years put together."

Speaking at groundbreaking ceremonies at the new Aston Park Hospital site at Rhododendron Park, Taylor said, "I believe that we are on the opening page of the most brilliant chapter in medical history — a chapter yet to be written and read and used in service to mankind."

Taylor said there is a need for the three principal hospitals — Memorial Mission, St. Joseph's and Aston Park — to coordinate their services, adding, "I know that Aston Park Hospital has been and is interested in such coordination."

Of Aston Park, he said, "Today we break ground for an institution in which each of you can feel a just and great sense of pride." He singled out H. G. Strom and the Rev. Harold Borchert, past and present presidents of the board of trustees, for their work, and gave credit to the civic, business and political leaders who have supported the hospital.

"Today," he said, "we salute the members of the hospital family who have worked untiringly at their various jobs," the administrator, Jeff Pearson, the doctors, the nurses, and others on the medical and administrative staffs, the employes, the Women's Auxiliary and its president, Miss Lucille Fitzgerald, and others.

Aston Park's new 150-bed general hospital will cost some $6.8 million.

Taylor said that a child born 50 years ago had a life expectancy then of 50 years; and the average life expectancy of a child born today is nearly 80 years.

"We now live longer, are healthier, and have more leisure time because of the miracles of modern medicine," he said.

Borchert, in his remarks, said that modern hospitals do not mean "push-button medicine."

"No matter how advanced the technique, or how scientifically accurate the diagnostic equipment, there is still an area in modern medicine that can only be described as spiritual," he said.

He called healing ultimately "a mystery, known and understood only in part by the best of us," adding the medical and para-medical personnel understand their limitations and "realize that no man or woman can assume the prerogatives of God."

Aston Park Hospital, he said, sees itself as a partner with other hospitals in Asheville, and pledged that "we are concerned for you in your problems, and we offer you our heart.

"We ask only your continued support in this ministry of healing through all our hospitals to all our people," he said.

Dr. Roger Rothrock, president of Roger Rothrock and Associates, who made a survey of the feasibility of the relocation and expansion of the hospital, praised the hospital for its "full measure of loving and dedicated care to its patients."

He said that Aston Park, although non-sectarian, "in many ways if the most Christian" of hospitals, adding that Christianity "stressed love and service to all, regardless of race, creed or religion. This is the tradition of Aston Park Hospital."

Dr. Rothrock also asked for continued help for alcoholics and better preventive medicine.

He also explained the concept of the single-patient room, which "will provide privacy and dignity to all patients, regardless of ability to pay."

The concept, he said, will enable more beds to be used since there will be no concern about segregation of patients as male or female, adult or child, and physicians and nurses will better be able to treat the patients individually.

Others participating in the ceremonies were the Rev. John Knight, pastor of Calvary Baptist Church; Miss Emily Mashburn, a trustee; Miss Fitzgerald; Miss Elaine Mashburn, director of nurses; Dr. John Kerr, chairman of the professional activities committee; and J. Bertram King, architect who designed the new hospital.

City Councilman J. W. Hoyle introduced Taylor.

The Rev. Tom Stockton, pastor of Central United Methodist Church, gave the benediction.

A reception was held in the National Guard Armory after the ceremonies.

Asheville Citizen November 22, 1971

West Asheville Bridge To Close

Workmen will begin tearing down the West Asheville Bridge at 10 a.m. Monday, according to State Highway Commission spokesmen. The bridge is so old and deteriorated that reduced load limits have been in force for some time. In the aerial photograph above, looking from West Asheville toward the east side of the French Broad River, the existing bridge is left of dotted line. The line on the right shows approximately where the new bridge will start from Haywood Road. On the east side of the river, the new bridge will end slightly to the left of the existing structure. Both ends of the bridge will be blocked off to traffic Monday; but, Riverview Drive, Craven Street, Park Avenue, North Park Avenue, Jefferson Drive and Clingman Avenue will be open to traffic. C. R. Duncan Construction Co. of Stoneville was awarded a $1,297,512.14 contract in December to replace the bridge by Aug. 1, 1973. Proposed letting date for the approaches is April, according to Project Resident Engineer W. J. Krickbaum Jr.

Asheville Citizen January 7, 1972

1970's V

Hearing Officer's Conclusions Filed

Aston Park Hospital Application Given Unfavorable Initial Report

& - CITIZEN

By MARY COWLES
Citizen Staff Writer

Aston Park Hospital's application for a certificate of need from the North Carolina Medical Care Commission to build a 200-bed hospital on its Rhododendron Park site in West Asheville has received an unfavorable recommendation from the hearing officer.

Decision on issuance of the application, however, will not be made until the commission itself considers the application and hears statements from interested persons. The next meeting of the commission has been tentatively scheduled for June 30, and it has been proposed that the application be considered at that time.

Findings and conclusions of William F. Henderson, hearing officer for the commission, and his recommendation were contained in a letter received Tuesday by Herbert L. Hyde, attorney for the hospital, from I. O. Wilkerson Jr., acting executive secretary for the commission.

In his conclusions, the hearing officer held that Aston Park's new hospital would be unnecessary and a "weakening duplication of services and undesirable dilution of physicians' time in treating patients at widely separated hospitals, adding that Memorial Mission Hospital of Western North Carolina and St. Joseph's Hospital have plans to meet expected needs for the foreseeable future, as well as the capability for doing so.

Henderson contended that there is an acute shortage of paramedical personnel, particularly nurses, in the Asheville area, and that this shortage would be made more acute by the new facility. Aston Park has presented the argument that a sufficient number of paramedical personnel could be trained.

The hearing officer said further that with completion of St. Joseph's expansion program, the additional need in the Asheville health community by 1977 would be only four beds. This was established by a formula which he said is used throughout the country as well as by the Medical Care Commission.

"In view of indicated lack of support by physicians in the area," Henderson concluded, "it is unrealistic to expect that the existing 45-bed Aston Park Hospital, currently operating at 87.9 per cent occupancy, would upon completion of 155 additional beds, attain occupancy rates of 85 per cent by the first year, 90 per cent for second year and 95 per cent by the third year."

He said estimated high costs of borrowing funds for construction of the proposed facility coupled with probable low occupancy rates following completion would result in inordinately high costs.

The hearing officer noted in his findings that Aston Park had presented evidence of bed need in areas other than those used by the Medical Care Commission in applying its formula, and including counties outside multi-county planning region B, designated by the governor for uniform planning purposes.

Counsel for Aston Park submitted that Buncombe County's three major hospitals actually serve the 11 counties in Mountain Ramparts Inc., approved area-wide health planning council; that at the time of the application there was a 1977 projected bed need of at least 1,756 beds in the Mountain Ramparts Inc. area, and that hospitals in existence and planned leave an unfilled, projected need of between 180 and 191 beds.

From the most current patient origin records for the three hospitals, the number of beds in existence and planned in the area the three serve left an unfilled need of between 310 and 333 beds, the hospital spokesman said. The unfilled bed need for 1977, he contended, would be at least 302 in the area historically served by the three hospitals.

It also was submitted that the bed occupancy rate for Buncombe County is above that of the state average.

J. F. Pearson, administrator of Aston Park, said of the hearing officer's recommendation, "We are disappointed, of course, but we will wait now to see what the commission decides."

Meanwhile, he added, architectural planning will continue without interruption.

Asheville Citizen — February 7, 1972

A-CITIZEN FEB 12 1972

Note-Writing Vandal Breaks Into Bank

The Federal Bureau of Investigation and Asheville police are searching for a note-writing vandal who broke into the Westgate branch of the Bank of Asheville sometime Thursday night, scattering papers and cigarette butts around and leaving three notes.

An FBI spokesman said the note-writer was evidently fairly well educated and intelligent, judging from the printed notes left behind, along with the litter.

One of the notes read: "Everyone that works here is dead. Ice Berg Slim is my name. Money and murder is my game. How smart are you? Memphis, Tenn. Hint." Another read: "I Shall Return. Ice Berg Slim."

Nothing was taken from the bank, although every one of the accessible drawers in the building had been ransacked, authorities said.

The note-writer broke into the bank through the glass rear door, according to FBI sources.

Asheville Citizen February 12, 1972

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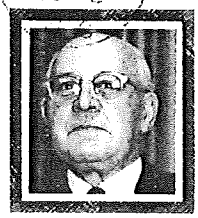

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Presenting...

Mr. Ray Kisiah

Director of Parks and Recreation for the City of Asheville

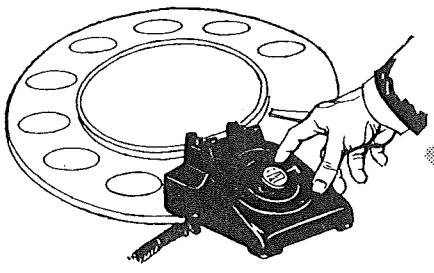
Frank Leppert, Program Chairman has an outstanding evening in store for us. Mr. Kisiah comes to our city with an excellent background in his field. He will bring us up-to-date on plans for parks and recreation in Asheville.

Plan now to bring your wife, park in the rear of the restaurant, eat a delicious meal, and enjoy the fellowship of a good meeting. The Challenge is out to each of us! PLAN NOW TO BRING AS YOUR GUEST AT LEAST ONE WEST ASHEVILLE BUSINESS MAN WHO DOES NOT REGULARLY ATTEND OUR MEETINGS. We need these other business men; and, who knows, they might need us, too!

Our entire Association wishes to express our sympathy to the family of Clyde Kinser. His recent death is indeed a loss to each of us.

WABA MEETING Tuesday, March 21, 1972

Keeter's Restaurant



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Hearing Held On Aston Hospital

A - CITIZEN MAR 2 1972

Medical Society Challenges Plan

By JAY HENSLEY
Citizen Staff Writer

RALEIGH — The North Carolina Medical Care Commission was told here Wednesday the proposed construction of a new 200-bed Aston Park Hospital in Asheville would go a long way toward easing a crucial shortage of nospital facilities in the area.

And J. F. Pearson, Aston Park administrator, said that construction must not be delayed because one trust fund of $250,000 requires that construction must be under way by 1974 or the money will go outside Buncombe County.

But a spokesman for the Buncombe County Medical Society argued that the Aston Park construction would put the facility outside the present "hospital complex" on Biltmore Avenue and could drain off available personnel staffing the existing hospitals.

Aston Park, a 50-bed general hospital located on the west side of downtown Asheville, wants to build on a new site it owns at Rhododendron Park.

A law enacted by the 1971 General Assembly requires that a "certificate of need" be issued by the Medical Care Commission for new hospital construction. This is only the second application to be considered by the commission under the new law.

Dr. George Gilbert of Asheville read statements prepared by the executive committee of the Buncombe County Medical Society opposing the Aston Park plan and endorsing the new law requiring that hospital facilities within each community be developed "without unnecessary duplication."

Gilbert said members of the society had voted on the policy statement by mail, and that the vote was 107 to 13 in favor of the committee's policy. Others of the 215 members did not respond, he said.

Herbert L. Hyde, Asheville lawyer representing the hospital, argued that silence on the part of many members of the medical society indicated disapproval of the executive committee's policy, and that the vote therefore was misleading.

Gilbert said the society "is distinctly opposed" to the development of acute-care beds on the Rhododendron Park property for several reasons.

"The development of acute care beds, medical and surgical, removed physically from the already developing centralized medical center complex in and around Mission and St. Joseph's, will require unnecessary, unwise and very costly duplication of facilities and services already offered in this area," Gilbert read from the medical society's statement.

"The cost," he said, "is always ultimately borne by the people of the community."

Several persons, including Buncombe County Commissioner Roy M. Trantham, spoke in favor of issuing the Aston Park certificate.

The mountainous section of the state affected, Trantham said, has experienced a shortage of hospital facilities since the old Biltmore Hospital was closed.

He said Commission Chairman Gordon Greenwood also had asked to be placed on record in favor of the hospital's proposal.

Pearson, who testified in detail about the Aston Park construction plans, said that another $400,000 in the construction fund must be used only for extended care beds, and said that $300,000 has been raised locally for the construction.

Dr. Claude Steen Jr., chief of staff at Aston Park, said the Rhododendron Park site is an excellent place for the new hospital and within easy access of the people it would serve. He said it is more accessible than the existing complex around Mission and St. Joseph's.

Asheville Citizen March2, 1972

Salvation Army Planning

CITIZEN

MAR 17 1972

Fund Drive For New Center

T. J. Covington III, chairman of the Salvation Army's Asheville Advisory Board, Thursday announced plans for a $500,000 capital building fund drive to be conducted by the Salvation Army between April 15 and July 15.

In making the announcement, Covington said, "The Salvation Army and the members of its Advisory Board have been planning toward an expansion program for almost 10 years. The old Salvation Army facility which they have occupied at 177 Patton Ave. for the past 45 years has become completely inadequate to meet the needs of Asheville and Buncombe County. Plans for a new Community Service Center have been prepared. The proposed facility will consist of approximately 17,000 square feet of area and will be located at 750 Haywood Road."

Covington indicated that the new Community Service Center would consist of a gymnasium and youth center, chapel, welfare offices, activities rooms, band room, nursery, kitchen and dining facilities, emergency supply rooms and all related Salvation Army facilities.

"The new Community Service Center has been planned in such a way as to enable the Salvation Army to offer a very effective Boys Club and Girls Club Program, as well as a Youth Activities Program," he said. "It is estimated that approximately 1,000 boys and girls will become active in The Salvation Army's youth activities programs upon completion of the new center. In addition, the center will contain all of the Salvation Army's welfare services and self-help programs for both teen-agers as well as adults. Various self-help educational classes will be conducted in the activities room. In addition, there will be a family center and the center will contain chapel facilities that will enable the Salvation Army to expand its spiritual and religious services to the unchurched of the community."

Covington said that this would be the first building fund drive conducted by the Salvation Army in Asheville and Buncombe County during the 82 years that it has served the area.

"This will represent the Salvation Army's once-in-a-lifetime Capital Fund Drive," he said. "All of the funds raised through the Building Drive will be used locally to construct, equip and furnish the new Salvation Army facilities. These facilities will exist for the use and benefit of the entire community."

Covington said that approximately 150 business and civic leaders of the greater Asheville area would be actively engaged as working members of the campaign organization.

"The Salvation Army's Building Fund Drive has received the full cooperation and support of the United Fund of Asheville and Buncombe County and a majority of the leadership of the United Fund will be involved within the Salvation Army's Building Fund Organization," he said.

Asheville Citizen ~~May~~ Mar. 17, 1972

Voluntary Agencies–V

Six Hospitals Serve Asheville Area

A-T 3/24/72

By PHILIP CLARK
(Fifth of eight parts)

Asheville and Buncombe County's 43 voluntary agencies include six hospitals. Three of them are general hospitals, two are psychiatric hospitals and one is an orthopedic hospital and rehabilitation center.

Memorial Mission Hospital with 430 beds is the largest of the three general hospitals. It serves as a regional medical center for all of Western North Carolina.

Memorial Mission operates nine out-patient clinics in which fees are scaled in proportion to income. The nine clinics are rheumatic fever, family planning, eyes, gynecology, heart-medical, maternity, diabetic, sick children and surgical. There is an intensive care and coronary unit.

Memorial Mission Hospital carries the great bulk of caring for the medically indigent in the community who are not poor enough to be on welfare but are too poor to pay all of their hospital fees. Hospital authorities have complained of this burden which must be passed on to paying patients. The Board of County Commissioners has allocated $200,000 for this purpose to Memorial Mission but hospital spokesmen say that is still not enough.

The annual budget of Memorial Mission Hospital is some $12 million. The staff numbers 950 persons. Philip B. Stull is chairman of the Board of Trustees. Ralph E. Jennings is executive director. The hospital staff can call on the assistance of 500 volunteers in the Pink Ladies and the Candy Stripers.

St. Joseph's Hospital is a non-profit general hospital sponsored by the Sisters of Mercy of Belmont, N. C. The present hospital has 183 beds and 30 bassinettes. There is an intensive care and coronary unit. A School for Medical Technologists is operated in connection with the hospital.

St. Joseph's has a staff of 445 persons and an annual budget of some $4,335,000. Some 265 volunteers assist the staff. A school for practical nurses and training programs for nurse assistants, surgical assistants and other paramedical fields are operated in affiliation with Asheville - Buncombe Technical Institute.

Edward F. Deacon is chairman of the board of directors. Sisters Mary James Scholl is vice president and administrator.

St. Joseph's will soon start construction on a new $9.1 million 282-bed hospital building.

Aston Park Hospital is a non-profit general hospital with 50 beds. There is no obstetrical department. The hospital's annual budget is $1,096,000. There are 109 full time members of the staff, with some 30 volunteers serving regularly.

Aston Park plans to build a new 200-bed $6.8 million hospital in West Asheville.

PHILIP CLARK

Appalachian Hall is a 100-bed psychiatric hospital devoted to the treatment of all types of mental and nervous disorders and selected cases of alcoholism and drug addiction. There is a staff of 155 persons and an annual budget of some $1.4 million. Dr. William R. Griffin Jr. is chief of staff.

Highland Hospital is owned by Duke University and operated as a private, non-profit psychiatric institution. The hospital has 130 beds and operates Homewood school on the grounds for emotionally disturbed adolescents. The staff of 225 persons includes psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers, nurses, occupational therapists, recreational therapists and certified teachers.

Dr. Charles W. Neville Jr. is medical director.

Orthopedic Hospital and Rehabilitation Center treats children and adults with physical disabilities. Treatments include occupational therapy, physical therapy, speech therapy and audiology. There is special education in pre-school for ages three through six and year round special education for grades one through high school.

The hospital has 50 beds for multiple handicapped children and a 24-bed adult rehabilitation center offering work evaluation, psycho-social adjustment and physical rehabilitation.

Funds for the $890,000 annual budget are received from state and private sources. The United Fund makes a $10,000 appropriation for the pre-school. There are out-patient clinics for orthopedic, cerebral palsy, speech and hearing and amputee patients. The staff of 123 persons is assisted by 26 volunteers.

Harold Thoms is president of the board of trustees. W. H. Bird is administrator.

Late in 1971 the Buncombe County Board of Commissioners, acting under state enabling legislation, named a seven-member Buncombe County Hospital Authority with Asheville attorney John F. Shuford as chairman. Membership in the Hospital Authority is open to all Buncombe County hospitals but is not obligatory on any of them. A major concern of the new body was stated to be finding solutions to the problem of financing the hospital care of the medically indigent.

The sixth article in this series on the voluntary agencies will deal with agencies in the social service field.

Asheville Times Marcgh 24, 1972

St. Joseph's Hospital

For 68 years the "Hospital People" of St. Joseph's Hospital have been caring for the people of Western North Carolina.

In November, 1900, a small frame building on French Broad Avenue was rented by the Sisters of Mercy. Three Sisters and their superior, Sister Mary Gertrude, opened a 12 bed sanitarium for tuberculosis patients.

The present site on Biltmore Avenue was purchased by the Sisters of Mercy in 1909 and the home standing on that property was used to house twenty patients.

In 1916 the South Wing of the present building, which was planned by Sister Gertrude, was completed and provided thirty five private rooms with sleeping porches and private or connecting baths.

By 1938, great progress had been made in the fight to eradicate tuberculosis and the need for general hospital facilities in Asheville exceeded the need for private sanitoria.

To meet this need the Sisters of Mercy converted St. Joesph's Hospital to a general hospital. Extensive renovation of the building and installation of equipment of an operating suite and clinical laboratory, expansion of X-ray facilities, and the establishement of obstertical and pediatric departments provided facilities for the care of 110 patients.

In 1958 the Madonna Wing, the first major addition to the hospital property was opened increasing the patient capacity of the hospital to 170 beds and 30 bassinets.

St. Joseph's Hospital is owned and operated by the Sisters of Mercy, who hold the belief that St. Joseph's Hospital is a community resource, not the instrument of a particular group.

For each patient more than 50 pairs of hands are ready to serve. These hands have a common goal — "better patient care." A hospital is truly people caring for people.

In 1967 10,212 patients were admitted to the hospital and 66,-121 days of patient care were rendered with personal interest, understanding and professional skill.

Approximately ten and one-half million dollars was turned back into the community during the past five years by St. Joseph's Hospital thus making it an important factor in the economy of Western North Carolina. A total of $10,478,741 was spent by the hospital for payroll, food, supplies and utilities from 1963-67.

St. Joseph's Hospital is fully accredited by the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Hospitals, and is licensed by The North Carolina Medical Care Commission. It is a member of the American Hospital Association, the North Carolina Hospital Association, the Asheville Hospital Council and the Catholic Hospital Association.

Through it's continuous programs St. Joseph's Hospital endeavors to meet the need for better qualified workers in every phase of hospital operation. Training is offered to those already in the hospital field and those qualifiied to enter the field. This hospital trains personnel not only for its own needs but contributes well trained qualified workers in many fields to other health facilities.

Aston Park

Aston Park Hospital opened its doors as the French Broad Hospital, a private institution, on April 26, 1922.

The hospital was the realization of a dream for Dr. J. G. Anderson, co-founder with Dr. A. T. Pritchard and Dr. A. W. Calloway. Dr. Anderson was born in Paint Fork, Madison County and had worked his way through Mars Hill and Wake Forest Colleges and Louisville Medical College. From boyhood he had wanted to be a doctor, have a hospital in Western North Carolina, and make hospital care available to all who needed it.

In 1927 a $250,000 wing was added, increasing the capacity to a 100-bed facility.

Five years later Aston Park Hospital, Inc. purchased the facility and the owners outlined plans to make it a community institution and make the hospital immediately available to charity cases as often as necessary.

The "new wing" of 1927 is now all that remains of the original 100-bed institution. Built to accommodate 32 beds, it now has 53 beds.

When Mission, Biltmore, Asheville Colored and Victoria Hospitals merged to form Memorial Mission, Aston Park elected to retain its identity and reputation as an excellent small hospital.

The need for a new hospital was long recognized, however. Because a majority of Aston Park's patients came from west of the French Broad River, and because West Asheville's population was growing rapidly, and wanted a community hospital of its own, Aston Park officials began to consider relocating in that area.

Late in 1964, Aston Park went to the public for money for the first time, launching an Assistance Fund drive to raise $75,000 for indebtedness incurred over the years, largely from the care of non-paying patients.

The campaign generated wide community recognition of Aston Park's past services to the community and its present needs, and, in 1966, an anonymous gift of $100,000 was made to the hospital to purchase the city's Rhododendron Park in West Asheville.

A survey of Asheville's hospital needs, completed earlier that year by the Department of Hospital Administration of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, had strongly recommended the site.

Aston Park now had a strong case for going to the public for capital funds for the first time in its history, but the other two general hospitals had long had on their drawing-boards plans for extensive improvements and expansions. The North Carolina Medical Care Commission had stated, following publication of the survey report, that there would be no more federal funds for Asheville's general hospitals for at least two years and, in any case, not until an agreement on priorities was reached.

Federal funds would be immediately available, however, for Extended Care facilities. Since these are a feature of all modern hospitals, Aston Park agreed to begin hospital construction on Rhododendron Park with an Extended Care Wing of 100 beds, as the first unit of a 150-bed general hospital to be completed later. The $2,849,000 Tri-Hospital Drive now under way will provide the $840,000 for the EC Wing as the local portion, with federal funds making up the remainder of its total cost.

Asheville Times, March 24, 1972

Speedway Features

ASHEVILLE CITIZEN-TIMES, Sun., Apr. 9, 1972 5B

'All New' Look

Local Racing Scheduled Friday

By JIM HAMER
Citizen-Times Sports Writer

The New Asheville Speedway is going to be just that for the fans and drivers when the 1972 season opens Friday night.

The emphasis is on "new" this season, according to Buddy Gooden, the veteran race track manager and promoter who came to Asheville from Columbia, S. C., to handle the speedway for the current leasee, Albert Hice.

"We're finishing up the processing of the paving of the track, the new bleacher construction and minor details," Gooden said Friday. 'Everything will be ready to go next Friday night. Rain is the only thing that will keep us from opening.

"Several of the drivers have been out to look things over and all I've talked to are thrilled about the new paving. They can't wait. From what I understand," continued Gooden, "the track was real rought last year.

"One driver told me it was so slick you couldn't get a good bite and wore out enough rubber (tires) in a 50-lap feature to normally run 200-laps on another track. This is going to be a big advantage to the drivers in reducing their racing costs."

Then Gooden threw in a disadvantage that all the racers would have, but the fans would love.

"They're all going to be at a disadvantage coming in here for the first race," explained Gooden. "All the boys are talking about where they think the groove (part of track where fastest speeds are obtained) will be.

"Of course, none of them will know until they've run the track a time or two. We think and are hoping it is at the top of the track. In fact," said Gooden, "I'm going to say it's going to be at the top of the track because of the new paving.

"If it is, look for a whole lot faster races than there have been here in the past. The new asphalt will make the drivers not as afraid to get up close to the wall and the higher up they get, the faster they'll run. Barring wrecks and too many caution flags, the racing as a whole should be a whole lot faster."

Gooden said Roy Trantham, one of the local drivers entered Friday, has predicted that once the entries had set up their cars and run a couple of races that qualifying times would be in the 14 second bracket.

"And with all this and judging from the entries who will be here I feel it will be the most competitive group in the Asheville area ever."

Some of the names to look for in victory lane, according to Gooden, are Jack Ingram, the Sportsman Grand National point leader, in a new Chevelle; Bob Pressley, who holds the old track record, in a new Chevelle; Trantham in a Ford; Browning King of Hendersonville, who was Hobby champ of South Carolina last year, in a Chevelle plus the Chevelles of Hickory drivers Harry Gant and Ned Setzer.

"We have a good concept in qualifying that the fans will like a lot more," added Gooden. "We will qualify all cars but the ones who do not make the top six or eight times will have to run a 10-lap qualifying heat to determine their start.

"Qualifying times won't effect anyone except the top six or eight drivers. We're doing this to prohibit a driver from dropping out of the qualfying heat race because he is afraid of wrecking his car. This way if he wants a good starting spot, he'll have to earn it."

Gooden said the new bleacher facilities would seat 6,000 fans with room for 1,000 to 1,500 in in the infield. "There's not a bad seat in the house," he said.

"I hope the people will come out and support us," said Gooden, "since we put in so much time on the track for them. They deserve the best in racing.

"There are going to be a bunch of brand new cars here and I'd hate to guess who will win the races or even the pole."

Gooden also has plans in the working for a special 100 or 200-mile Grand National feature each month at the speedway.

"We have a 200 event tentatively set for May 19," said Gooden. "Bobby Allison told me at Hickory last week that he would run here if it didn't interfere with qualifying on the major Grand National NASCAR circuits."

THE CITIZEN

Salvation Army Fund Drive To Begin In May

The Salvation Army's first capital fund drive ever in Buncombe County will be conducted in May, June and early July with a goal of $500,000, T. J. Covington III, chairman of the Salvation Army Advisory Board, said Monday.

The funds are needed to build and equip a Community Service Center to replace the 45-year-old Salvation Army Building at 177 Patton Ave., where limited facilities and space have forced the army to operate under great handicaps with each passing year, Covington said.

He said the new center will be built on property at 750 Haywood Road, and will have approximately 17,000 square feet of indoor space.

The new center has been designed to accommodate a gymnasium with boys' and girls' locker rooms, both boys' and girls' clubs, youth activities center, youth director's office, fellowship hall and family service center, kitchen and dining facilities, nursery, band room, library, day-care center, counseling room, emergency supply room, food storage room, welfare center, and chapel.

"This new Community Service Center will be of tremendous importance to our entire community," Covington said. "The family service programs conducted by our local Salvation Army assist and help great numbers of young people, adults and entire families."

Covington said the Salvation Army has been actively serving the Greater Asheville-Buncombe County area for more than 82 years, noting that the "army" came to Asheville just eight years after it came to the United States.

He stressed that the current expansion program has been in the planning and development stage for the last six years. Greatly concerned by physical limitations under which the Salvation Army has been operating, the advisory board has planned the Community Service Center in such a way as to greatly expand its youth and character-building programs, Covington said.

With completion of the proposed center, he said, the Salvation Army youth programs will be able to serve 1,500 boys and girls as active participants, compared to the 550 or so now taking part.

"One of the finest things about the Salvation Army's youth programs," he said, "is the careful supervision and direction that is given the children by the Salvation Army staff and volunteers."

Any funds raised above the $500,000 goal, Covington said, will be used to replace or renovate the old building on Patton Avenue for use as a welfare center and transient shelter.

He said the building fund drive has received the full cooperation and support of the United Fund and a majority of the leadership of businesses and civic organizations in Asheville and Buncombe County.

Anyone wishing further information about the building fund campaign is encouraged to call the Salvation Army office at 253-4723 and ask for Jack McDowell, Covington said.

Asheville Citizen April 25, 1972

Aftermath Of Storm

'I Was Driving Along And This Tree Fell On Me

The CITIZEN JUN 24 1972

By ED SPEARS
Citizen Staff Writer

Talk about close calls, and Don Harrison can tell you about one he had, when an electrical transformer fell on the car he was driving about 7 p.m. Friday and he escaped unhurt.

"I was lucky, I tell you," he said shortly after the mishap that started when a large tree toppled on utility wires at the corner of Brownwood Avenue and Haywood Road in West Asheville. Two poles were pulled over, one carrying the transformer.

Don, 16-year-old Clyde A. Erwin High School student, son of Weaver Harrison of 15 Starmount Ave., was on a delivery trip for Bennett Drug Store, 472 Haywood Road, his summer employer. He was alone in a 1972 Duster, on Brownwood Avenue.

There had been no high winds blowing, and the first sign of something unusual was a blue flash as the wires were pulled down by the weight of the tree, apparently weakened from recent heavy rains and winds.

"I stopped the car when I saw the flash," Don said. "When my windshield cracked, I fell into the seat . . . as low as I could.

"I didn't have much time to do anything. The transformer hit the roof and knocked big dents in the car.

"I just sat there a while, then looked around for live wires. There were none on the car, so I got out.

"Already some men were there directing traffic away from the power lines. The power company men got there, then the police," Don said, and emergency repairs quickly got under way.

A Carolina Power and Light Co. service spokesman said not too many homes had called about power failure, these largely from Brownwood, Haywood and Waynesville avenues, and that with two crews on the job, service was expected to be restored before

Asheville Citizen June 24, 1972

Aston Park Plans Test Of Hospital Rule

CITIZEN
JUL 1 1972

By MARY COWLES
Citizen Staff Writer

Aston Park Hospital was refused authorization to build a new hospital by the North Carolina Medical Care Commission Friday, but promptly announced it will begin court proceedings immediately to test the law requiring a certificate of need.

Harold Borchert, Aston Park board chairman, announced the plans for litigation, and at the same time said that regardless of the outcome of the suit, there will be a new Aston Park Hospital and that plans for it will continue without further delay.

"We have been delayed, but not halted, and our financing for the new hospital is secure." Borchert said.

The certificate of need requirement was enacted into law by the North Carolina General Assembly last year. Aston Park's application is the second to be considered by the Commission under the new law.

Borchert said the board of trustees had taken official action authorizing the suit and that its members are confident of success in the court procedure because of a number of legal questions which have been raised.

The Medical Care Commission went into executive session to reach a decision on Aston Park's request after hearing testimony from Herbert L. Hyde, counsel for the hospital, and Dr. George Gilbert, representative of the Buncombe County Medical Society who spoke in opposition, followed by Hyde's rebuttal.

In disallowing the hospital's application, the commission acted in accordance with the recommendation of William F. Henderson, former executive secretary of the commission who conducted the Aston Park hearing last March.

At that time testimony was given by Dr. Gilbert, Dr. Robert Moffatt, representing Mountain Ramparts Health Planning Inc., and Charles Wright, representing St. Joseph's Hospital.

Hyde and Alfred N. Salley, also an attorney for the hospital said Friday that some of the legal questions involved are constitutionality of the statute requiring a certificate of need and The "inordinate" delays since the hospital's application was filed, early in October last year.

J. F. Pearson, Aston Park administrator, said he had felt concern because the western region of North Carolina has no representative on the 20-member commission which has jurisdiction over issuance of certificates of need.

"Plans for expansion of Aston Park were unanimously endorsed by the board of our Mountain Ramparts Health Planning Inc. last December," Pearson said, adding that this action was minimized before the commission and made to appear insignificant.

Pearson said Mountain Ramparts is recognized by the state as the only areawide health planning council authorized to perform reviews of hospital expansions in this 11-county area.

Pearson said the Medical Care Commission staff had computed that with St. Joseph's new hospital facility completed, only four more beds will be needed in Asheville by 1977.

This computation, he said, is for the four-county Planning Region B (Buncombe, Henderson, Madison and Transylvania Counties) established under Gov. Bob Scott's 17-region planning agency concept.

"Had the same formula and population projections used by the commission staff been applied to the actual 11-county area served by Asheville hospitals, it becomes clear that the Aston Park expansion will not cause an excess of beds."

Borchert said there are many, both in and outside the medical community, who recognize the fact that statistical evidence shows the need for beds the new hospital will provide.

"However," he said, "there are those who, although recognizing the need for more beds, are yet unwilling to see them in an area other than the presently overcrowded central medical complex."

Borchert stressed that contributors to the Tri-Hospitals or Aston Park Hospital Fund drives need not be concerned. All funds received by Aston Park from the Tri-Hospitals' drive are being held in a separate category to be used for extended care facilities only, and all funds designated for general beds in the hospital in Rhododendron Park will definitely be used for for that purpose, Borchert said.

Aston Park's proposal called for a 200-bed hospital to be built in Rhododendron Park, West Asheville, at an estimated cost of $6.8 million. Fifty of the beds would replace those in use at the hospital's present site on Hilliard Avenue, and 50 new general beds would be for treatment of varying levels of care, including extended and intensive care.

The project would be financed with borrowed funds and donations. The board chairman announced last September that arrangements had been made with a large New York financial house to cover all requirements in excess of loans which could be made by local institutions.

Asheville Citizen July 1, 1972

Aston Park Suit To Be Filed Soon

Aston Park Hospital's suit challenging constitutionality of the state law requiring hospitals to obtain a certificate of need from the North Carolina Medical Care Commission befort initially new construction will be filed this week in Superior Court.

Herbert L. Hyde, attorney for the hospital said Wednesday he intends to file a petition the latter part of this week calling for review of the findings of the Medical Care Commission on which denial of Aston Park's application for a certificate was based and that the matter probably will be scheduled for hearing in approximately a month. The hospital sought authorization to build a 200 bed hospital in Rhododendron Park, West Asheville.

Hyde tetrmed as "tragic" the need to go to court, but said this is the hospital's only recourse. "If the certificate of need law stands," Hyde said, "we are entitled to a certificate based on the evidence."

The attorney said he views the certificate of need law as unconstitutional "because it interfers with the freedom of contract without any rational relationship to health, safety or public welfare."

He said the "grandfather" clause in the law raises another question in allowing hospitals to be built or expanded without the Hospital Care Commission's approval if they filed their petitions before the 1971 law was enacted.

The Rev. Harold Borchert, president of Aston Park's Board of Trustees, reiterated the hospital board's intention of proceeding with construction of a 120-bed hospital, on that basis. It was explained that plans are sufficiently flexible to permit the addition of two nursing floors of 40 beds each, in the event the hospital wins its suit.

Aston Park Suing For Right To Build 200-Bed Hospital

By MARY COWLES
Citizen Staff Writer

Aston Park Hospital Inc. Thursday called for a court ruling on its right to build a 200-bed general hospital in West Asheville.

In a notice of appeal from an order of the North Carolina Medical Care Commission denying the hospital's application for a certificate of need for the facility, Aston Park also challenged the constitutionality of the law prohibiting new hospital construction without a certificate of need, and asked that it be declared null and void.

Attorneys for the hospital contend, in a petition filed in Superior Court of Buncombe County, that the law violates constitutional provisions and is discriminatory and that the proceedings of the Medical Care Commission were shot through with legal errors.

The hospital is represented in the action by attorneys Alfred N. Salley and Herbert L. Hyde.

The petition contained 81 exceptions to the commission's ruling and order, and later in the day a supplement was filed holding that the statute "Is an unconstitutional attempt to delegate legislative power and provides no guildelines, standards or criteria for determining the areas to be served."

The petition sets out that the law governing new hospital construction is a violation of the North Carolina Constitution in that it denies to Aston Park Hospital the right to continue as a non-profit, charitable corporation, to rebuild in the only feasible and economical way possible, using land to which it holds a fee simple title.

The petition says the act has no rational relationship to the health, safety or general welfare of the people of North Carolina nor to the police power of the state, that it effectively abolishes Aston Park as a non-profit, hospital corporation and that the law treats this hospital differently from other hospital corporations which had preliminary plans pending before the commission at the time the new law was ratified.

Filing of preliminary plans was not required by state law and there was no reason for them to be filed except by hospitals seeking use of federal funds, the petition relates, adding that the granting of total immunity from the entire "Certificate of Need Act" to hospitals such as St. Joseph's, which had filed preliminary plans, constitutes "arbitrary and capricious" application of the "grandfather clause."

The petition contends further that it creates "perpetuities and monopolies in other hospital corporations whose physical plant and facilities just happened to be newer on the date of the enactment of the legislation. . ."

The long list of exceptions to the commission's ruling charged, among other things, that the decision was reached in a secret meeting in Raleigh June 30 and that the meeting was not held solely for the purpose of reaching a decision in an adjudicatory action or proceeding; that the attorney general of North Carolina, appearing on behalf of the commission, acted in an advisory role to the commission and an adversary role where the applicant-petitioner was concerned.

The exceptions also said the hearing officer was not an unbiased examiner but favored the position taken by the Buncombe County Medical Society in opposition to the applicant; that the commission did not afford a hearing before the full commission; that the procedures and rulings were affected by errors of law, and that, on advice of the Office of the Attorney General, the hearing officer declined to rule upon questions as to admissibility of evidence, but heard the evidence.

Attached to the petition was a stipulation in which attorneys for the petitioner and the Attorney General's Office agreed that the application for a judicial review will be held in Superior Court of Buncombe County.

Asheville Citizen July 21, 1972

Hospital Wins First Legal Test

'Certificate Of Need' Ruled Unconstitutional

By LUELLE CLARK
And MARY COWLES
Citizen Staff Writers

Superior Court Judge Lacy H. Thornburg ruled Friday that the state "certificate of need" law controlling construction of medical care facilities is unconstitutional.

The ruling gave Aston Park Hospital the first round in its legal battle for the right to build a 200-bed general hospital in West Asheville, but the Attorney General's office, representing the North Carolina Medical Care Commission in the suit, immediately filed notice of appeal.

Attorneys for the hospital and for the Medical Care Commission agreed to bypass the North Carolina Court of Appeals and go directly to the Supreme Court, which is expected to receive the case by December.

Judge Thornburg's ruling followed a hearing on a petition filed by Aston Park Hospital July 19 asking for a review of the findings of the Medical Care Commission in denying the hospital's application for a certificate of need, and challenging the constitutionality of the law which became effective July 21, 1971.

Although several issues were raised in the hospital's petition, Judge Thornburg ruled only on constitutionality of the law.

Herbert L. Hyde represented Aston Park Hospital and Mrs. Christine Y. Denson, assistant attorney general, was attorney for the Medical Care Commission.

Hyde argued that a "grandfather clause," exempting construction for which preliminary plans had been filed with a state licensing agency prior to the effective date of the law, was "arbitrary and capricious and denies equal protection of the law and due process of law."

Hyde said this provision of the statute affords immunity to some hospitals while withholding it from others and cited as an example "the spectacle of St. Joseph's Hospital building new and additional beds in Asheville without having to prove need, while Aston Park is prohibited from doing the same thing unless it proves need."

The hospital's attorney attacked the law on the basis that it is an unconstitutional attempt to delegate legislative power and provides no guidelines, standards or criteria for determining the area to be served.

The statute violates the North Carolina Constitution by denying Aston Park the right to use its own land for hospital purposes, the purpose for which it was chartered in 1929, Hyde said, adding that telling a hospital it will not receive a certificate of need could amount to denying its existence or to continue what it is doing.

And Hyde said the statute as written tends to create perpetuities and monopolies, curbing competition and protecting existing hospitals from further competition.

"If Aston Park goes out of business," he said, "then St. Joseph's and Memorial Mission can get all of the business and do what they want." Hyde cited written policy of the Medical Care Commission based on the stated opinion that North Carolina needs no more hospitals in communities where there are no existing facilities and that there are sufficient sponsors of hospital services in communities where hospitals and cited as examples Clay and Graham counties, which have no hospital beds and under the policy will have none.

"The law is not aimed at health, morals, safety, welfare or anything else — only monopoly," Hyde told the court.

Mrs. Denson contended that the same standards for determination of need and licensing are applied by the law to all facilities, whether governmental, proprietary or nonprofit and noted that Aston Park, itself, had preliminary plans on file which would have entitled it to exemption. But the plans were for 50 long-term care beds, 50 acute-care beds and 20 beds for alcoholics, she said.

The radical change in Aston Park's plans, quadrupling in size from 50 to 200 beds demanded a drastic increase in personnel, she said.

Regulation by requiring a license and satisfaction of certain standards, as provided by the North Carolina hospital act, in effect since 1947, is only one step removed from requiring a certificate of need, she said.

Mrs. Denison urged the judge to "give credit" to the Medical Care Commission for its expertise in hospital planning, shared, she said, by no other group in the state.

Noting that when sick, no one stops to consider where he may be treated most economically, she said the purpose of the statute was to prevent duplication of services and thereby reduce medical care costs. Mrs. Denson said a law giving the Medical Care Commission authority beyond licensing is needed.

Asheville Citizen September 9 (?), 1972

A-1 10/17/72

Arrests Made In 2 Slayings

By MIKE BOYD
Times Staff Writer

Police reported arrests were made today in two unrelated slayings in the city last night.

Mrs. Erie E. Warren, 60, of 370 Deaverview Rd., was found murdered in her home about 2:40 a.m. today by police. She had been beaten about the head, police said.

Lester Caldwell Jr., about 40, of 33 Club Rd. was dead on arrival at Memorial Mission Hospital after being found fatally injured lying on the sidewalk in front of 105 Eagle St. about 1:30 a.m. today.

Detective Capt. William Nail said Marion June Gardner, 26, of 188 Blanton St. has been charged with murder in the death of Caldwell.

Nail said an arrest had been made in the death of Mrs. Warren, but the warrant had not been served by early afternoon.

And officers were dispatched to the Travelodge Motel at 200 Tunnel Rd. about 2:30 a. m. where the desk clerk reported being robbed of $380 by an armed gunman.

Officers were summoned to the Warren home by a neighbor who told them over the telephone "something is wrong over there."

Arriving on the scene, the officers saw Mrs. Warren through a window lying on the floor inside and forced the door. She had suffered a number of severe blows about the head, according to the report, and was dead when officers got inside.

A suspect in the West Asheville incident was being questioned by detectives by daylight today.

Officers were dispatched to the 100 block of Eagle Street about 1:30 a. m. in response to a call reporting three males beating another man in the street.

The men had fled when officers arrived to find Lester Caldwell Jr., an employe of the city water department, lying on the sidewalk with a piece of cement weighing about 20 pounds on his head.

Officers called an ambulance to rush the beaten man to the hospital, where he was pronounced dead on arrival.

One man was taken into custody a short time later by officers, who put out a pick-up order on two others.

No charges had been filed in either case at mid-morning.

The night desk clerk at the Travelodge Motel reported he was robbed by a masked bandit armed with a pistol.

Edward Watts of Rt. 3 Asheville said a young man wearing a white tee shirt and blue trousers entered the lobby of the motel where he was working behind the desk, bought a package of cigarettes from the machine and left.

Minutes later, a bandit believed by officers to have been the same man, entered wearing blue trousers, a gray sweater and an orange ski mask, walked up to the desk and produced a pistol.

"This is a hold-up," Watts quoted the man as saying.

Watts said he placed the motel's cash in a bag, but when he began putting the silver in, the bandit directed him to stop, saying the change was too heavy.

The armed man then ordered the clerk to stand still and ran out the door, Watts told police.

Bloodhounds brought to the scene were unable to pick up a trail beyond the motel parking lot.

Asheville Citizen October 17, 1972

2 Charged With Murder In Separate Incidents

A 60-year-old widow was killed in her West Asheville home Monday night and, in an unrelated incident, a 41-year-old Asheville man was slain on Eagle Street about 1:40 a.m. Tuesday.

Police identified the victims as Mrs. Erie Frady Warren, who lived alone at 370 Deaverview Road and Lester Caldwell Jr. of 33 Cub Road. Both apparently died of bludgeoning attacks, according to police reports.

Detective Sgt. J. W. Silvey said Marion "Wolfman" Gardner, 27, of 188 Blanton Ave., has been charged with murder in the death of Caldwell, who recently left the city Water Department to take another job.

Charged with murder in the death of Mrs. Warren, is B. C. Holt, 66, a neighbor of 364 Deaverview Road.

Holt had called the police at 2:40 p. m. Tuesday saying "something is wrong over there," according to police. Officers found Mrs. Warren dead in her bedroom, lying beside her bed, and said she had been hit on the head with a boot several times, causing fatal brain and skull fractures. Holt was later served with the murder warrant by Sgts. C. R. Rhew and Ralph H. Cook.

Sgt. Cook reported that after his arrest, Holt signed a statement indicating that he and Mrs. Warren had been in a heated argument Monday night at her home, that he lost his self control and beat on her with a boot he said he found at her house and later threw away.

A retired carpenter, Holt had no previous police record, Cook said.

The boot that reportedly was the death weapon was not found Tuesday, Sgt. Cook said, and another search for it is planned.

Sgt. Silvey said Gardner signed a statement in jail saying that Caldwell came up to him while he was drinking wine in front of 105 Eagle St. and tried to take the wine away from him.

The statement further said, according to the police sergeant, that Gardner then grabbed a two-by-six piece of timber and hit Caldwell, who fell to the ground.

Sgt. Silvey said another suspect had been questioned and released in the case. He said there apparently were no witnesses other than the two men involved, and that the police investigation is complete.

Groce Funeral Home is in charge of services for Mrs. Warren, and Anders-Rice Funeral Home is in charge of final rites for Caldwell. Arrangements were incomplete Tuesday night.

Asheville Citizen October 18, 1972

N.C. - Asheville - Streets - Patton Ave 10/18/1972

BOB TERRELL

A-CITIZEN OCT 15 1972

Patton Avenue Boom

Charlie Elingburg stood in front of his Patton Avenue American Service Station and watched the traffic go by. When the stop light west of his station blinked green, three solid lanes of automobiles tore up the avenue like they were on the last lap and headed for the checkered flag.

BOB TERRELL

"I'd rather be on this end of town than on the other side of the tunnel," Charlie said. "The Hilton is really going to explode this strip along here." His reference was to that six-lane stretch of Patton Avenue leading west from Westgate, and to the Asheville Hilton Inn which, along with an 18-hole golf course, will be built just west of the Westgate Shopping Center and across the avenue from Charlie's station.

"The boom has already started," Charlie said. "The Putt-Putt golf course beside me has been closed and they're going to build a Hungry Bull restaurant there. I understand somebody's going to build an eating place across the road beside Byrd's clothing store there."

A telephone call to Donald W. Wells of Spartanburg, S. C., one of three partners in a firm called the Cowego Co., which owns and operates the chain of Hungry Bull steak houses, confirmed what Charlie told me.

A Beautiful Thing

"We've studied that stretch of Patton Avenue extensively," Wells said, "and believe it's really going to boom in the next five years. We're going to start building the first of the month and expect to open a 300-seat restaurant the first of March, 1973, on the property where the Putt-Putt golf course was. It will be a beautiful thing, built with a big beam ceiling, native stone and a lot of brick and glass, and the house specialty will be steaks."

Did announcement of the Asheville Hilton influence Cowego's decision to build a Hungry Bull on Patton Avenue?

"No," Wells said. "When we made our final decision we didn't know the Hilton was coming—but ain't that beautiful?"

"Beautiful it is," Charlie Elingburg said later. "The Hilton will influence a lot of building on this stretch of Patton. We need more good eating places and motels and we'll rival Tunnel Road—except with a lot more access and freedom of movement."

His point was sound. There is no tunnel to bottleneck traffic on Patton Avenue, and N. C. 191 already shuttles bypassing traffic around the area to I-40 West and I-26 South. Patton Avenue itself is a broad boulevard which can handle a lot of traffic. There is a lot of land available for building along its length.

"People are catching on already," Charlie said. "In the last three months several people have approached me to see if I wanted to sell or take on a partner in my station, but I don't. I built the business up myself and I'll keep going alone, I guess. Business is steady, no slack periods, and it just keeps growing and growing."

Good Help And Hard Work

The station was pumping 16,000 to 20,000 gallons of gas a month when Charlie took it over three years ago. Now his volume stands around 40,000 gallons. He works four men, including himself, and in the summer he worked two college girls and may hire more next year. "Girls don't mind working," he said. "They get out here and wash these mail trucks just like boys." Charlie's station services all government vehicles in town, a profitable contract for him, but it makes for a lot of work.

"I put in 80 to 90 hours a week," he said. "That's a lot of time, but it takes it. The secret of this business is good help and staying with the job. I couldn't find better help than I've got, and I certainly stay with it. I don't allow any drinking or cursing on the premises, and we try to give good service and keep the rest rooms clean. So far, my policy has worked well."

Another secret to Charlie's success has been his interest in automobile racing, which is a natural inclination for one in his business. Last summer he spread about $4,000 around in racing circles, putting some of it on purses at the local race track and using the rest to help local drivers.

"I allow myself so much advertising money every year," he said, "and that's the way I use some of it. The word-of-mouth advertising by the drivers I help has paid off, I believe, in a heavier volume of business from the racing crowd."

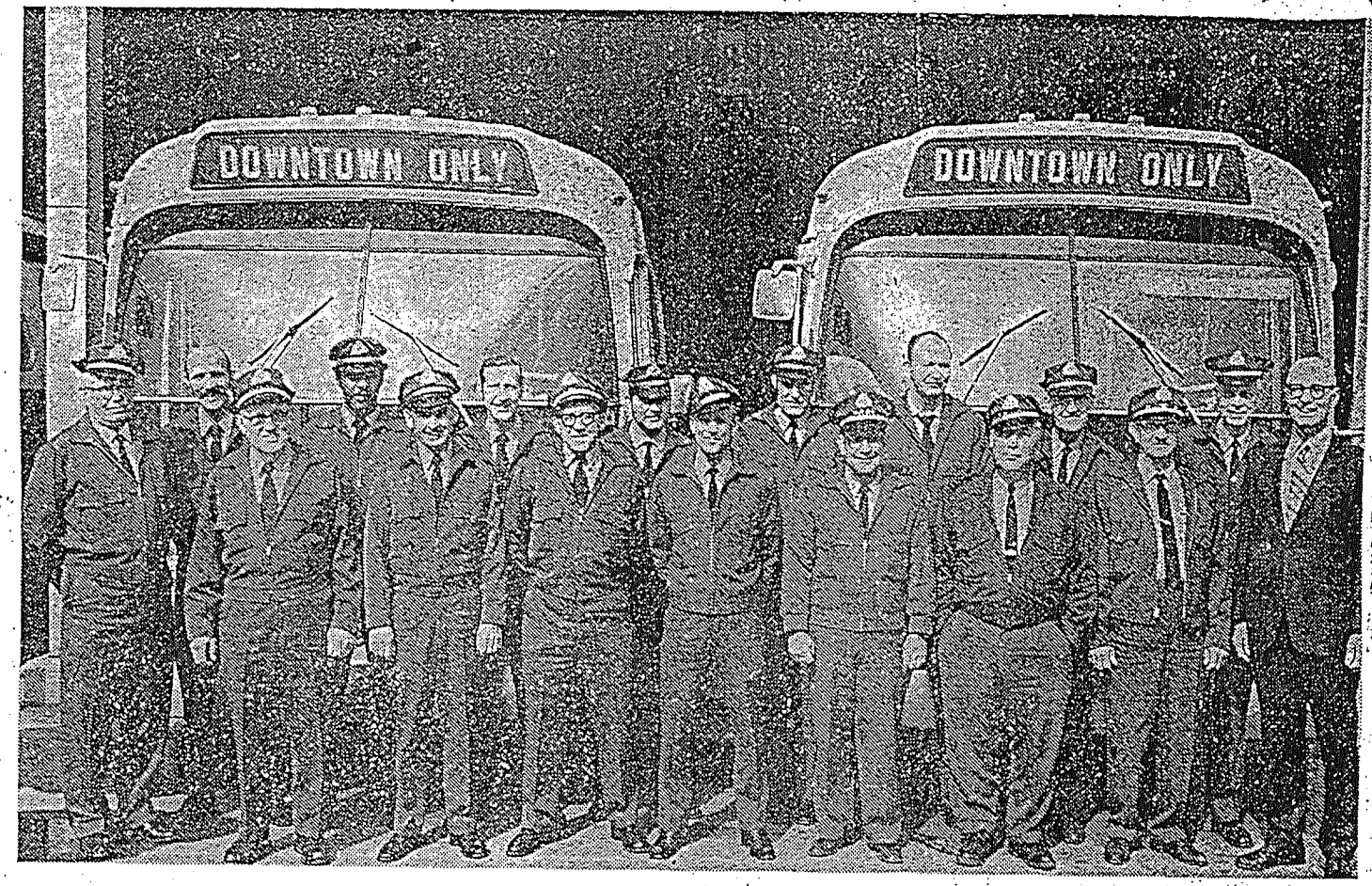
He gassed up a lot of race drivers' cars, gave them oil and expense money, all free and with no strings attached. A few times, he gave Jack Ingram his own credit card to finance trips to race tracks as Jack went after the national sportsman championship.

Charlie always was interested in sports. He came from a large family of athletes and played basketball and baseball himself at Valley Springs High School before graduation in 1959.

"Yes, I like sports," he said, "and I like my business too. I enjoy seeing everyone make good. That's why I try to help as many as I can."

If that's the case, then Charlie Elingburg will enjoy himself tremendously the next few years, watching Patton Avenue boom.

A-T 2/27/73



No Accidents In 1972

Asheville City Coach Lines drivers who had no accidents during 1972 are, from left, Harry Gaston, Hubert Smith, Melvin Briggs, Thomas Blair, Noe McHone, Namon Radford, Gene Rose, Wade Allen, Charles Coffey, Robert Owenby, Eddie Dalton, Roy Stafford, Carl Davis, Herman Taylor, LeeRoy Hopper and Roy Masters. Lyle Hackett, resident manager of City Coach Lines, administered by the Asheville Transit Authority, is pictured at far right. Accident-free drivers not present for the photo were Denver Towe and William Cassidy.

Asheville Times February 27, 1973 Namon Radford 398 Sand Hill Road

74 City Streets To Be Repaved

A-T 4/6/73

A full list of 74 streets to be resurfaced in a massive $281,000 spring resurfacing program was handed to City Council by City Manager Ernest J. Ward Jr. at a meeting Thursday in City Hall.

Streets Superintendent W. A. Bostic said today the city is already working on the program that should be completed by mid-summer, using $200,000 from federal revenue sharing funds, and money from state Powell Bill funds and local sources.

In addition to doing almost three times the work usually done in the spring, the city is getting a better quality job, according to Bostic. He said the surface will be one-inch instead of the usual, cheaper three-quarters of an inch of new pavement.

Here are the streets that will be resurfaced for their entire length:

Murdock Avenue, Woodley Avenue, Ramoth Street, Farrwood Avenue, Glenview Avenue, Valle Vista Drive, Reynolds Place, Pine Tree Road, Cambridge Road, Colonial Place, Wilshire Drive, Harris Street, Euclid Street, Drank Street, Davenport Road, Westgate Road, Vandalia Avenue, Hilliard Avenue, Myrtle Street, St. Dunstans Road.

Liberty Street, School Road, Raleigh Road, Lakeside Drive, Forest Hill Drive, Warwick Road, Old Toll Road, Crockett Avenue, Fernlawn Road, Arlington Street, Baird Street, London Road, Main Street, Ridge Street, Kenilwood Road, Finalee Street, Wanetta Street, Bristol Place, Roberts Street, Sorrell Street, Clemmons Street, Cumberland Place, Scott Street, and White Fawn Place.

Portions of other streets will be resurfaced. These are:

College Heights from W. T. Weaver Boulevard to the new paving at gym; Edgewood Place from Merrimon to Kimberly; North Griffing Boulevard, from 109 N. Griffing to the city limits; Beaverbrook Avenue from the new paving on Hillcrest to the concrete curb; Elkmont Avenue from Penetration to Beaver; Beaver Street from Merrimon to Mayfield; Washington Avenue from Chestnut to Hillside; Hillside from Merrimon to Broadway; Cumberland from the Model Cities office to the end of the street.

Westwood Place from Waynesville Avenue to the N. C. 191 connector; Deaverview Road from Bear Creek to the city limits; Hi-Alta Drive from Deaverview Road to Woodland Avenue; South Bear Creek Rd. from Mimosa Drive to the new curb and gutter; the paved portion of Madeline Avenue; Hanover Street from State Street to Kentucky Avenue; Carrier Street from Salola Street to Sulphur Springs; Old Haywood Road from Patton Avenue to the city limits.

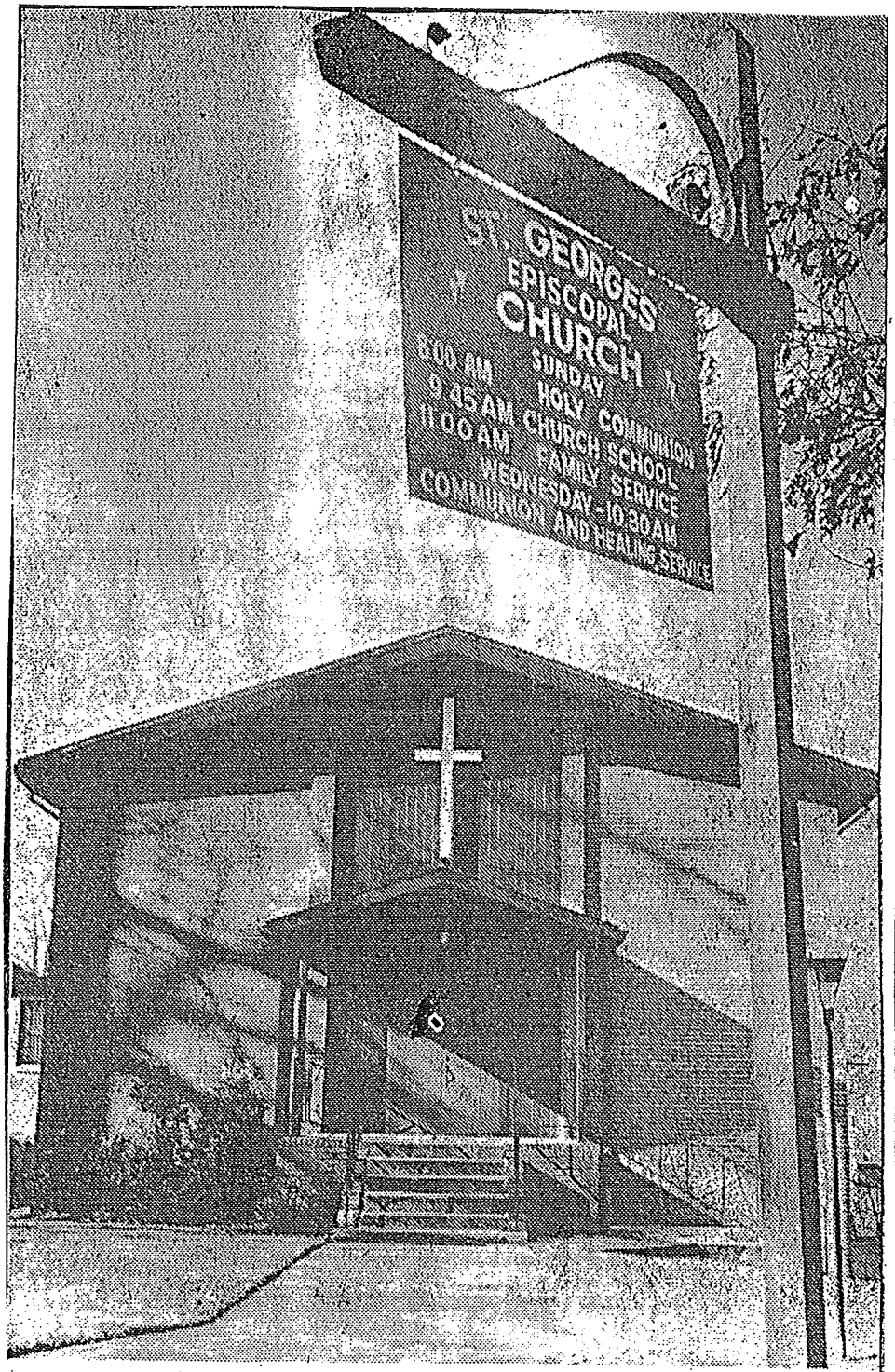
Millbrook Road from Westwood to the end; Fairview Road from U. S. 25 to the city limits; Merchant Street from Fairview Road to the new pavement; Beverly Road from U. S. 70 to New Haw Creek Road; Canterbury Road from Fairview Drive to the curve in the road; Kimberly Avenue from Hampstead Road to Beaverdam Road; Hazel Mill Road from Patton Avenue to Louisiana Avenue; Hazel Mill Road from Louisiana to the city limits; Montford Avenue from Cullowhee Street to Santee Street; North Lexington Avenue from Patton to Broadway; South Market Street from Eagle Street to Biltmore Avenue; and Appalachian Way from Hi-Alta to Huffman Road.

Asheville Times April 6, 1973

Club's 50th Anniversary

The Community Club of Asheville observed its 50th anniversary at its recent meeting in West Asheville Community Center with 10 past presidents attending. Shown are, (L-R): Mrs. Leo Bagwell, president; Mrs. Harry Atkins, a past president and program chairman; Mrs. W. K. Dalton, past president and historian; and Mrs. D. I. Gross, charter member. Other past presidents attending included: Mrs. Curtis W. Baldwin, Mrs. J. A. Goforth, Mrs. H. B. Almon, Mrs. J. C. Grice, Mrs. L. F. Locke, Mrs. V. A. Forsyth. Mrs. Ernest Briggs of Burnsville, president of District II, North Carolina Federation of Women's Clubs, spoke and Mrs. Dalton gave the 50 year history of the club. Mrs. Atkins was program chairman and hostesses were club officers. Trophies, pictures, year books and newspaper articles were on display. The club was organized April 20, 1923, with 115 charter members and Mrs. Charles B. Anderson, its first president. It was federated in 1927. In 1964 its clubhouse was torn down to make way for a new highway, I-26, and later the property was sold to Aston Park Hospital for a new location of the hospital. The main project of the club is to furnish a room for the new hospital. Over its 50 year history, the club has worked for the betterment of the City of Asheville and will continue this effort, according to the president. (Staff Photo by Dick Mauldin)

Bruce Emory
Research



25th Anniversary Observance Planned

St. George's Observing 25th Year

St. George's Episcopal Church at 1 School Road in West Asheville will observe its 25th anniversary Sunday.

The church began when a small group started meeting in the American Legion Hall on Haywood Street in 1950. They met there until the first church building was completed in 1951.

Present membership is 150 families. JAN 9 1975

Bishop M. George Henry and former pastors will be among the guests expected Sunday, along with former members and friends, who are invited.

The present pastor is the Rev. Victor McGuire, who became priest-in-charge in February, 1967. A Times

The Rev. Howard M. Hickey joined that first congregation, became a deacon and was ordained a priest during his stay at St. George's. He left St. George's in May, 1958, and was succeeded by the Rev. Kyle Bogger. During the next five years, St. George's was served by the Rev. Ross Baley and the Rev. P. Roberts Bailey.

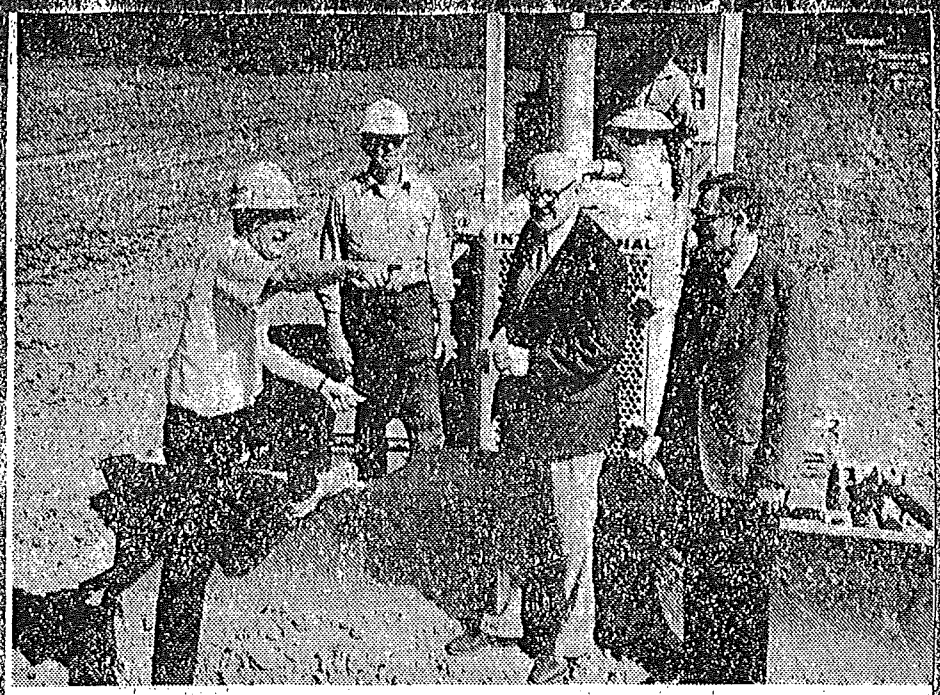
St. George's became a parish in January, 1966, and shortly after this, the church building was consecrated by Bishop Henry.

Along with being the 25th anniversary celebration, Sunday's confirmation service at 11 a.m. will be Bishop Henry's last official visit before his retirement.

The church service will be followed by a buffet luncheon served by the women of the church.

Asheville Times January 9, 1975

N.C. - Asheville - Eliada Home for Children 2/22/75



Ground Broken At Eliada

MAR 22 1975

Initial grading started Friday on the site for the new tabernacle on the grounds of the Eliada Home and several members of the board turned out for the event. Present were (L to R): Ken Maultsby, chairman of the building committee; Rex Morgan, of the Perry M. Alexander Construction Company; Arch Cameron, executive director of the Eliada Home, and Dick Perkins, director of the finance committee. R. E. Dorn is at the controls of the bulldozer. The new building will cost $80,000 and it is hoped that it can be completed for use this summer. (Staff photo by Malcolm Gamble.)

Salvation Army Dedicates Center

By CHARLOTTE HUTCHISON
Citizen Staff Writer

An overflow crowd of approximately 600 people attended Sunday's dedication of the Salvation Army Community Center at 750 Haywood Road. JUN 2 1975

In his dedicatory address, Lt. Col. Orval A. Taylor said, "The heart of this building is not its design, as attractive as it may be, but the people who use it and go from it renewed of mind and spirit, to make their ongoing contribution to this community."

Col. Taylor, chief secretary of the Salvation Army's Southern territory, emphasized the importance of dealing with people as both social and spiritual beings. "We are concerned with the whole person and the whole family," he said. "We heartily believe that we must bring the social and the spiritual together."

Describing the Salvation Army as "Christianity with its sleeves rolled up," Col. Taylor stated its purpose in the words of Sir Winston Churchill: "to serve humanity at the point of need and at the time of need."

He said that the Army has remained true to the concept of service stated by its founder William Booth, who said, "While yet there remains one dark soul without the light of God, I'll fight ... I'll fight to the very end."

Col. Taylor described the multifaceted program of the Salvation Army. "We carry out a traditional Salvation Army program, but our program becomes integrated more and more with the needs of the community. Here there is provided a program where people can participate in worthwhile endeavors, meet with each other and share fellowship." The program includes social, recreational and educational activities, he said, in addition to spiritual.

With the congregation reading responsively, the community center was dedicated "to the honor and glory of God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit ... to the pledging of ourselves to use our strength, our means, our all, for the spiritual welfare of mankind and the glory of God ... to service to all the people of this community of whatever race, creed or color."

In his introductory remarks, commanding officer Brig. E. W. Herring referred to the community center as a miracle, "a miracle sent to us for the people of Asheville."

Brig. Herring paid tribute to a number of local citizens through whose efforts the miracle took place. To Leonard E. Clayton, who served as "chairman of building the building," Brig. Herring presented a plaque "in appreciation of outstanding service and leadership."

The dedication service was held in the chapel, the focal point of which is a stained glass window designed and executed by Asheville artist Eugene F. Bunker. In the center of the circular window are three overlapping circles in the Salvation Army colors of red, yellow and blue. Superimposed on the circles, which represent the Trinity, is a cross. Extending outward to the edges of the window are fingers of flame, representing the fire of the Holy Spirit.

Bright yellow and green predominate throughout the rest of the center, which contains a full-sized gymnasium with showers and lockers, a general activity room, kitchen, ten classrooms, a library, game room and other play areas. The total area of the building is 18,000 square feet, plus 47,000 square feet of playground area, outdoor courts and parking.

The director of the center is Gary Davis, a native of Asheville. Davis sees infinite possibilities for the use of the center, but he intends to play it somewhat by ear, starting gradually and expanding in whatever directions the community wants and needs.

According to Davis, the center is designed for ages six and up, both male and female. Although it is located in West Asheville, he emphasized that participation will be citywide. Membership fees will be $1 per year for children and $3 for adults.

Activities will include basketball, volleyball, tumbling and various games. Soon to be installed in the outdoor play area behind the building are swings, slides, climbing apparatus, and equipment for basketball and horseshoes. There will also be a picnic area.

The athletic programs will have no tryouts, Davis said. "Anyone who signs up gets to play," with participation limited only by the number that the staff and the facilities can accommodate.

Davis hopes eventually to have clinics and instructional programs, not merely supervised play. "We'll need coaches, instructors, supervisors — anyone with skill and desire," he said. His office number is 258-2283, and he would welcome calls from persons interested in participating in any of the Center's programs.

Now that the building is completed and paid for, the need for community participation and support is far from over. "When we see people who are anxious and willing to get involved, we are heartened and encouraged," Col. Taylor said. He urged those present to stay involved and help to carry out the important work that remains to be done.

Asheville Citizen June 2, 1975

Appreciation

Brig. E. W. Herring, commander of the Salvation Army, presented a plaque to Leonard F. Clayton in appreciation of his leadership during the building of the new community center. (Staff Photo by Bill Sanders)

Overflow Crowd

Lt. Col. Orval A. Taylor, second in command of Salvation Army operations in 15 southern states plus Mexico and the District of Columbia, delivered the main address at Sunday's dedication of the Salvation Army Community Center in West Asheville. His audience extended beyond the chapel, overflowing into other parts of the building. (Staff Photo by Bill Sanders)

Asheville Citizen June 2, 1975

'Tired' Aston Park Hospital To Close

By MARY COWLES
Citizen Staff Writer

Aston Park Hospital's board of trustees has voted to close "the tired old building on Hilliard Avenue."

In announcing its decision, effective Sept. 30, the board made it clear, however, that it has no intention of quitting the local health field.

David DeArmond, board chairman, said the board is now studying plans for serving the community in a different role — that of long-term care facility.

SEP 25 1975

The board's action was made necessary by the fact that the hospital has "operated this past year at a loss in spite of dramatic cost reductions and improvements in efficiency," DeArmond said.

A Citizen

The decision to close was announced Wednesday following a meeting of the steering committee of the Buncombe County Hospital Authority in the Wachovia Bank Building. At this meeting a report on a study of long-range hospital-based health service needs of the community identified the need for long term care to be of foremost significance, with the need for primary care ranking next.

The report was made by Mary Ann Holohean, project director for Block, McGibony Plus Associates, which is under contract with the Buncombe County Board of Commissioners to do the study. Also at the meeting was Dane Long of Llewelyn-Davies and Associates, which holds a sub-contract.

The study indicated that Aston Park could best contribute to the community through the delivery of long term care or primary care, and DeArmond said his board had decided to begin implementation of the study proposal immediately.

"Details for constructing a long term care facility and possibly, at a later date, a primary care center, are already being investigated," he said.

—Continued From Page One

facility now being contemplated would be between $1.5 and $2 million, of which the hospital has in hand at least a half million.

DeArmond said $200,000 of the original $700,000 building fund had been expended on plans which had to be scrapped, and the hospital was reimbursed by Medicare. Medicare's auditors, however, have challenged the reimbursement and no final decision has been reached.

At Wednesday's meeting, the Hospital Authority Steering Committee commended the action of the Aston Park hospital board in closing the hospital and the committee offered its "collective services to assist Aston Park in studying future services it might offer consistent with the hospital study now under way."

For the past year Aston Park Hospital has been under the management of Hospital Affiliates, with J. Michael Ward as hospital administrator.

Aston Park now holds a license for a 50-bed acute care facility, and it will be necessary, DeArmond said, to obtain a license for a 120-bed long term care facility. "We have been assured that the need for these services is such that we should have no problem in obtaining the license," he said.

DeArmond estimated that the cost of the long term care

Ward said Hospital Affiliates is not in the long term business at present, but he will stay on "until loose ends are tied up." Ward said the 27 patients now in the hospital will be transferred to other hospitals, or in some cases, released, if their condition warrants.

DeArmond said the board had not made Sept. 30 a mandatory closing date, but "one to shoot at." He said the hospital will continue to operate in the public interest and will stay open longer if there is need.

"We are sad for our employes," DeArmond said, "but we feel that with the quality of our staff, we will have little difficulty in placing most of them in other facilities.

"We are most grateful for the tremendous community support over the years and solicit the continued support of everyone. A small number of doctors have been primarily responsible for Aston Park being able to continue to operate until now and to them, the board extends its grateful appreciation."

DeArmond also had strong praise for the support given by the hospital staff and its women's auxiliary, and pledged the same kind of dedication in the future as has been shown in the past.

The term "tired old building" was applied to the facility on Hilliard Avenue by former board chairman James Daniels in 1974 when the hospital was still struggling to implement an ill-starred building program initiated in 1966.

Enlargement and improvements of the other two hospitals, changes in their plans, the rising costs of hospital care, and other difficulties have forced Aston Park to change its plans several times.

Said DeArmond: "We are reluctant to set a definite time, but we are hopeful that with six or eight months of planning and six or eight months of construction, we may be in operation in a year or so. We are again hopeful and enthusiastic."

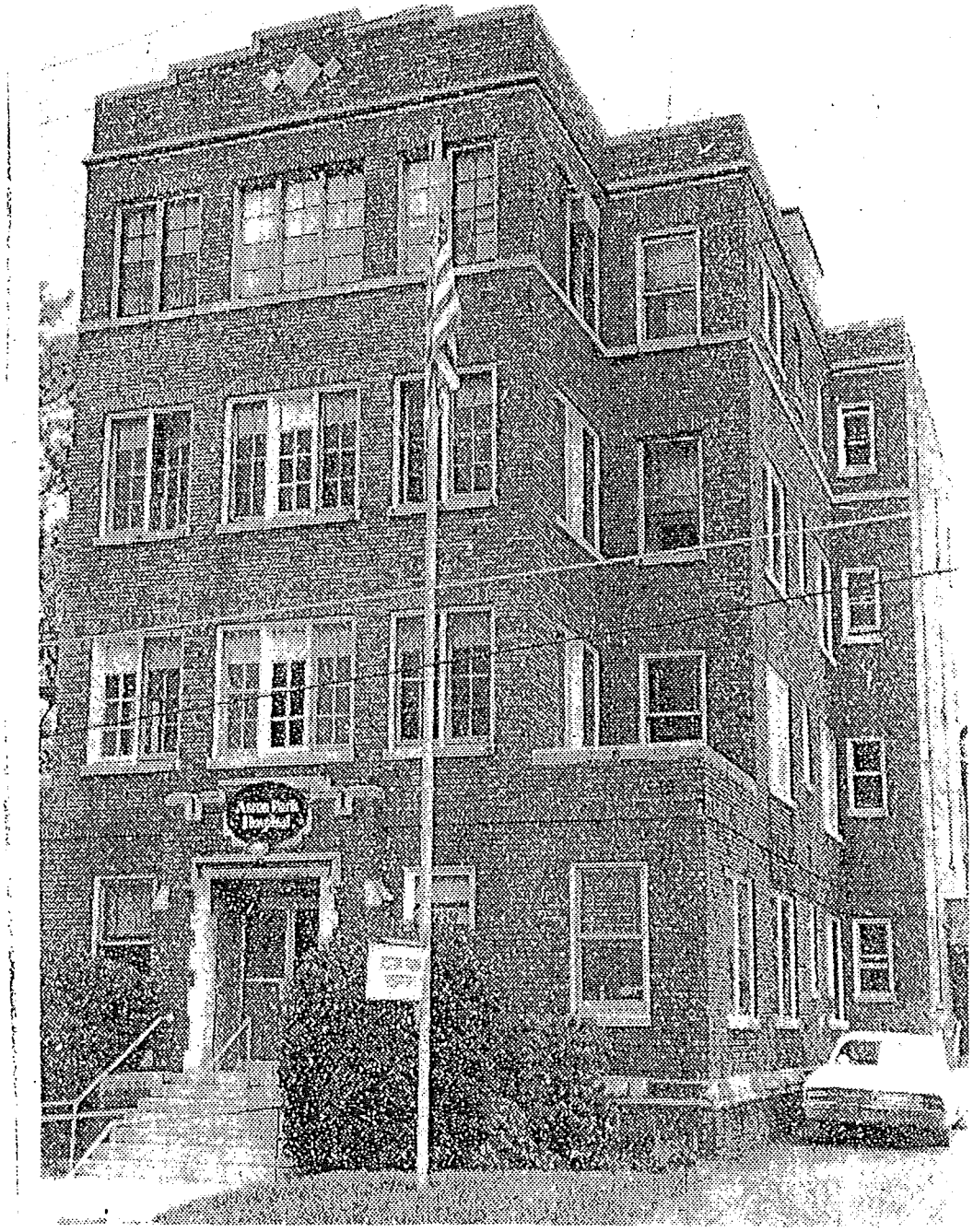
Asheville Citizen September 26, 1975

N.C.

- Asheville - Hospitals - Aston Park Hospital

10/1/1975

Aston Park Hospital Closes After 53 Years Of Service



Aston Park Hospital—Patients All Gone

Asheville Citizen October 1, 1975

After 50 Years, Aston Park Closes Doors

By MARY COWLES
Citizen Staff Writer

Aston Park, the well-loved little hospital founded more than 50 years ago in a converted rooming house, closed its doors Tuesday.

But even as the last of the 30 patients were being removed—most of them to their homes, two to other hospitals and some to nursing homes — the Aston Park Board of Trustees was meeting to map plans for a new start as a long-term care facility.

David DeArmond, president of the board, said the trustees are contacting consultants who specialize in long-term care, some in the area of development and planning, some in construction, some in management and some in all three, to determine the most feasible course.

OCT 1 1975

A survey firm, retained by the Buncombe County Board of Commissioners, has found that the community's most significant need is long term care and that this would be Aston Park's most constructive role in the health care field. A Citizen

DeArmond said the board has three options: to attempt to work out its own plans, to retain consultants to develop plans up to the beginning of construction, or to retain a firm specializing in long-term care and development to plan and manage the facility.

DeArmond said the department heads will remain at the hospital another month at least completing details incident to closing the institution, and the structure will be under 24-hour security guard.

He said no decision has been made on disposition of the building or equipment, but the building will be appraised in the near future.

"We have had some offers on equipment," DeArmond said, "and this is one of the reasons we want to retain consultants as soon as possible to help us determine what should be retained."

A buffet luncheon for hospital employes and their families and board members and their wives will be held at the hospital from 11:30 a.m. Wednesday until 2:30 p.m.

Aston Park was founded as a private hospital in the former rooming house on South French Broad Avenue by the late Drs. Arthur T. Pritchard, J. B. Anderson and A. W. Calloway.

It was known at that time as the French Broad Hospital, headed originally by Dr. Pritchard and by Dr. Anderson following his death.

The Pritchard Memorial Wing, now the main hospital building, was dedicated in 1928 to the memory of Dr. Pritchard.

The following year the hospital was leased and converted into a public hospital by Aston Park Hospital Inc., a newly formed corporation made up of Asheville businessmen, which subsequently purchased the hospital in 1932.

Construction of the Pritchard wing had increased the hospital's bed capacity to 100, but the original structure was abandoned in 1931 and razed in 1939, reducing the capacity to 50 beds.

Through its more than half-century of operation the little hospital was patronized by area residents who, it was frequently said, "wouldn't think of being sick anywhere else" and much of its present building fund of approximately $700,000 came from contributions of patients who shared this sentiment.

Asheville Citizen October 1, 1975

By GINGER FURNESS
Times Staff Writer

Aston Park Hospital ended its career as an acute care hospital Tuesday. A Times

Six patients were served lunch, but none were scheduled to have supper in the hospital that has served Asheville since 1922. Oct 1, 1975

The decision to close the hospital was announced last Wednesday by David DeArmond, president of the Aston Park Hospital board of trustees.

The hospital was born in a converted boarding house on South French Broad Avenue. Then, in 1927, a new building was constructed at the cost of $100,000 and named the French Broad Hospital. It was the dream come true of three doctors who personally contributed their time, ideas and money to the project.

The doctors — all dead now — may still cling to the memories of some folks. They were Dr. James Garrett Anderson, Dr. A. T. Pritchard and Dr. A. W. Calloway.

In 1929, it was renamed Aston Park Hospital and in 1930 it survived a fire which started in the X-ray laboratory.

Over the years, it has provided a personal, down-home kind of care to the patients who passed through its doors.

What brought about its closing?

It wasn't lack of forward thinking — an artist's rendering of a proposed $6.8 million hospital complex, which was to be built in West Asheville to replace the old Aston Park Hospital, still hangs in the lobby. Plans for the new hospital were abandoned earlier this year.

Quality of medical care wasn't the problem — a current certificate of accreditation also hangs in the lobby.

Perseverence wasn't the problem either — the hospital had fought and won landmark court battles in 1973 and 1974 which struck down the state law requiring private hospitals to obtain a "certificate of need" from the North Carolina Medical Care Commission before initiating construction.

It was this long legal battle that finally brought the hospital to its knees. Interest rates and construction costs shot up during the long wait until finally in January of this year, DeArmond announced that building a new hospital was no longer feasible.

The phenomenal growth of Memorial Mission Hospital and St. Joseph's Hospital also contributed to Aston Park's death rattles.

As medical care became concentrated in these two giants, some doctors began to complain about the inconvenience of traveling across town to care for a few patients at Aston Park Hospital. Then there was the argument — which rang of reason — that it was foolish to duplicate expensive cobalt and dialysis machines and the other expensive equipment required by modern hospitals.

"For the past year we've had only between 50 and 60 per cent occupancy," said Michael Ward, administrator of Aston Park Hospital.

"The other two hospitals have not had an occupancy problem — for the most part they've been full. Doctors haven't been admitting their patients here."

In fact, one of the reasons the North Carolina Medical Care Commission gave the hospital's new construction plans an unfavorable recommendation was an "indicated lack of support of area physicians" making it unlikely that the hospital could meet its occupancy goals.

The commission's report said Aston Park's new hospital would be a "weakening duplication of services and undesirable dilution of physician's time in treating patients at widely separated hospitals."

So yesterday, employes of Aston Park Hospital moved the equipment from the operating rooms and Mike Ward talked about establishing a long-term care facility or a primary care facility to replace the old hospital. Conversion, in either case, will take from 12 to 18 months, he said.

"Today it costs about $65,000 per bed to build an acute care hospital. But it costs only about $17,000 per bed to build a long-term care facility providing skilled and intermeditate nursing and self-care programs.

"Asheville needs a long-term care facility for patients who need nursing care but who aren't sick enough to occupy an expensive hospital bed.

"People who are recuperating from broken hips and major orthopedic operations would benefit from a long-term care facility."

Will Aston Park Hospital get into the nursing home business?

Not per se, Ward said. "It is true, however, that when older people are sick or injured, it takes longer for them to recover."

The board of trustees is also investigating the possibility of converting to a primary care center.

"We all know that most cases handled in hospital emergency rooms are not actually medical emergencies," Ward said.

"Asheville has an overabundance of specialists, but the average person who needs a family doctor usually ends up going through the emergency room. This clogs up the system and needs to be avoided."

A primary care center would be able to handle medical procedures not requiring an overnight stay — such as surgical removal of a ganglion cyst or an ingrown toe nail.

Aston Park Hospital will also investigate the development of an extensive home-care nursing program, Ward said.

"The biggest problem in this area has been lack of funding," Ward said, but passage of a national health care program, with emphasis on home health care, should stimulate this area of health care.

Ward, who is associated with Hospital Affiliates International, has only been administrator for 14 months at Aston Park.

He'll remain for another month to "tie up loose ends" and help to determine what equipment will be sold and what will be kept for future use in a new health care facility — perhaps in the "tired old building" that has its roots in city history.

"I've never worked with a more fantastic group of people or a better board of directors," Ward said. "I'd like to take them all with me when I leave."

Asheville Citizen-Times October 1, 1975

N.C. - Asheville - Weather 2/20/1976

Tornado May Have Been City's First

Thursday was a day for picking up the pieces in several Western North Carolina counties blasted by tornadoes and high winds Wednesday when a storm moved through the area.

An official damage estimate was to be completed Friday, according to Jerry VeHaun, Buncombe County civil preparedness coordinator. VeHaun said William Perrigo, Area F preparedness coordinator, was assessing the destruction in various parts of the mountain area Thursday.

VeHaun said damage in Buncombe County would probably not exceed $70,000. Most of that, he said, is the damage to the Kar Kare center and Service Distributing Co., Inc. service station, both on the Westgate exit ramp off Patton Avenue east in Asheville.

A few thousand dollars damage was done to utility lines also, he said.

The tornado which smashed signs and shattered glass at the garage and service station may have been the first ever to strike Asheville, according to the National Climatological Center here. A Citizen

No tornadoes were listed in the most recent annual issue of the Local Climatological Data publication, which summarizes all destructive weather events known to date.

Officials at the center could find no record of an earlier tornado in Asheville in other files.

FEB 20 1976

Though Asheville had no tornado history before Wednesday's 3 p.m. twister, tornadoes have struck elsewhere in the mountains in recent years.

The worst ripped through the Bealtown section of Murphy and the Stecoah community in neighboring Graham County April 3, 1974, killing five, hurting at least another 100 and leaving as many homeless.

At the same time, the Burke County Fairgrounds and two mobile homes in the Mountain Home section of Henderson County were destroyed by twisters.

Those tornadoes were part of a widespread series that turned five states into disaster areas in a two-day period, killing 335 and causing a half-billion dollars in property damage.

The thunderstorm complex and accompanying tornadoes that moved from Mississippi northeast through the Carolinas and Virginia Wednesday killed one person in Mississippi and three in southern Arkansas. Material damage was heavy in several states.

In Newport, Tenn., 15 miles west of the North Carolina border, a twister touched down in the main business district—where most of the stores were closed— shortly after 2 p.m. Wednesday.

The same twister overturned several mobile homes and caused minor injuries to a few persons in nearby Cosby and Sevierville, said authorities, who estimated damage at $1 million.

Police Chief Bud Ramsey said the casualty list would have been much higher had the downtown stores not been closed in Newport.

The known injured in Western North Carolina was an Andrews woman whose mobile home was overturned by the winds about 1 p.m. She was listed in fair condition at Andrews District Memorial Hospital.

Westgate Fair Attractions

The Candler Smooth Dance Team performed Saturday afternoon in the parking lot of Westgate Shopping Center as part of the High Country Fair sponsored by the High Country Crafters Inc. In the background is the gigantic orange, yellow, green and red striped hot-air balloon which dominated the skyline over the shopping center. (Staff Photo by Malcolm Gamble)

America's Birthday Party Gets Under Way In WNC

(Related Stories On Page 5D)

Damp, sometimes, but dauntless, residents of the mountain area turned out by the thousands Saturday for the first day of a long weekend celebrating the 200th birthday of the nation.

In Asheville, holiday activity centered on the City-County Plaza where Quality '76 sponsored what amounted to a two-ring circus with a sideshow.

From 10 a.m. clog teams clacked their way through intricate routines, banjos and guitars rang loudly and spirited horses paced and curvetted before admiring crowds.

Clowns clowned, dancers danced and some senior citizens grouped gamely as the Jubilee offered a wide range of entertainment.

Water was a part of it, too. Prominent personalities in the community got dunked repeatedly as accurate throws with baseballs triggered a dunking machine.

Some of the fastest action took place as musicians scurried to get their electronic gear under cover when the rain showers began.

In Biltmore Forest a wayward, although tethered, balloon gave some parents some anxious moments, but the young aeronauts it carried aloft were lowered unharmed to the ground.

At Westgate Shopping Center in West Asheville another captive balloon lured more hundreds to a crafts fair sponsored by the High Country Crafters at which local craftsmen displayed their wares at about 40 booths.

1918-19 Flu Epidemic Moved Fast, Hit Asheville Hard

By TOM OLIVER
Citizen Staff Writer

The long lost cousin of the swine flu—Spanish influenza—struck Asheville in 1918 and 1919. A,C4,2cA

The disease killed 500,000 Americans that winter and 20 million people world wide.

According to a 1918 edition of The Asheville Citizen, the population of Buncombe County at that time was about 30,000 people.

JUL 28 1976

The disease was caught by 5,000 of those people and more than 200 of them died.

No one knows why Spanish influenza was so deadly, according to Dr. H. Bruce Dull, assistant director of the Center for Disease Control in Atlanta.

But, the doctor said, there is no reason to suspect that swine flu will prove as deadly as the Spanish influenza.

The 1918 disease spread rapidly. In September Buncombe County residents were reading about the disease hitting cities along the coast. Local doctors volunteered to fight the disease there, according to The Asheville Citizen of that era.

By October the disease had arrived in the remote mountain town of Asheville, closing schools, churches, theaters and downtown Asheville stores.

The Oct. 5, 1918 edition of The Asheville Citizen told this story:

"With 8,000 cases of Spanish influenza reported in North Carolina and several cases in Asheville, the city commissioners and health officers yesterday ordered all public and private schools in the city to close, ordered that churches hold no public services, closed all theaters and placed restrictions on the serving of drinks at soda fountains and cafes."

Downtown Asheville was the weekend gathering place of the mountains. The downtown merchants, apparently worried about contributing to the disease, asked health officers to order all downtown stores to close at 6 p.m. on weekends to prevent large gatherings downtown, according to the Oct. 6 edition of The Asheville Citizen.

The newspaper carried a story in which the county health officer explained that the influenza was caused by "spit swapping."

The forms of spit swapping, he explained, were hand shaking, common dippers in water buckets, poorly sterilized soda fountain glasses and church coughing.

He urged citizens to pay the extra cost of paper cups in soda fountains and not to cough into the open air.

"Don't associate with the impolite and careless who spray your air with their spit," he urged.

In other parts of the country, theories for the disease and cures were being promoted.

A military doctor said the disease was the result of German gas warfare or germ warfare.

Another military doctor told the public that the Kaiser's submarines were landing diseased Germans in the United States and that they were attending public gatherings to infect the public.

The Atlanta Constitution interviewed a doctor who had fought yellow fever in Louisiana swamps and malaria in Central America. The fact that he was still alive made him a survival expert.

The doctor advised people to put sulphur in their shoes, a trick he said he learned from an old Negro woman in Louisiana.

The sulphur would soak into the body through the soles of the feet and prevent the disease, he said.

The Asheville Citizen told of a Winston-Salem health officer who ordered two cases of rum to treat his patients.

The state health board refused to approve the order. The doctor received two gallons of bourbon from a benefactor who approved of the treatment, but no rum.

Drug stores were running short of Vicks Vaporub and the Vicks company printed advertisements asking people to conserve the Vaporub during the national crisis.

The Asheville Citizen was also carrying ads for "Groves's Tasteless chill Tonic" which said the medicine, at only 60 cents a bottle, could cure the disease.

Public health officers issued warnings to the public against false claims for cures for the disease.

There is no cure for the disease, but experiments are being conducted to produce a vaccine which may someday prevent the disease, the health officer said.

Aston Park Architect Is Named

By MARY COWLES
Citizen Staff Writer

The Aston Park Hospital Board of Trustees — perhaps the only such board in the country with neither a hospital nor hope of one — has announced selection of architects for its proposed $1.8 million Aston Park Health Care Center to be built in West Asheville. A Citizen

The board has accepted the joint venture proposal of Wood and Cort of Asheville and Gruzen and Partners of New York City. JUL 31 1976

The selection came after several weeks of interviews with 11 architectural firms, according to John Woodhouse, board president, and was made in recognition of the benefits of combining a strong and experienced local firm with one nationally known for designing long-term health care facilities.

Development of programming, preliminary plans and schematics will begin immediately, Woodhouse said. He estimated that construction will begin in early 1977.

In general, the initial construction program contemplates 60 skilled care beds and 60 intermediate care beds and appurtenant facilities, such as physical therapy and recreation areas.

"This will by no means be an ordinary nursing home," Woodhouse said, explaining that the initial project will differ in its physical layout and that the next step will be the construction of small homes on the sloping area back of the main structure.

Ultimately, Woodhouse said, it is hoped that a clinic for general practitioners may be provided. At the outset, the board plans to have a physician on call at all times.

Peter Samton, a partner in the Gruzen firm and its design director, will be his company's representative on the local project, Woodhouse said.

Woodhouse said the board must have the plans for the new facility and an estimate of its cost before financing arrangements can be made.

"It looks like nothing is going to stop us this time," the board president said, adding that local hospitals are giving their full support.

Woodhouse said his board envisions a close tie between the hospitals, the skilled care nursing centers and the intermediate care centers which will work to the benefit of the patient.

"And we expect to offer in our health care center the same 'tender love and care' for which Aston Park Hospital was known for more than 50 years," Woodhouse said.

The Aston Park Hospital board fought a long and disheartening battle in an effort to build a new hospital on the West Asheville site that formerly was Rhododendron Park, but was compelled to change its goal from a hospital to a health care center.

In May the North Carolina Department of Human Resources issued a certificate of need for the health care center.

The board closed Aston Park Hospital Sept. 30 of last year and began plans for the long-term health care facility.

Asheville Citizen July 31, 1976

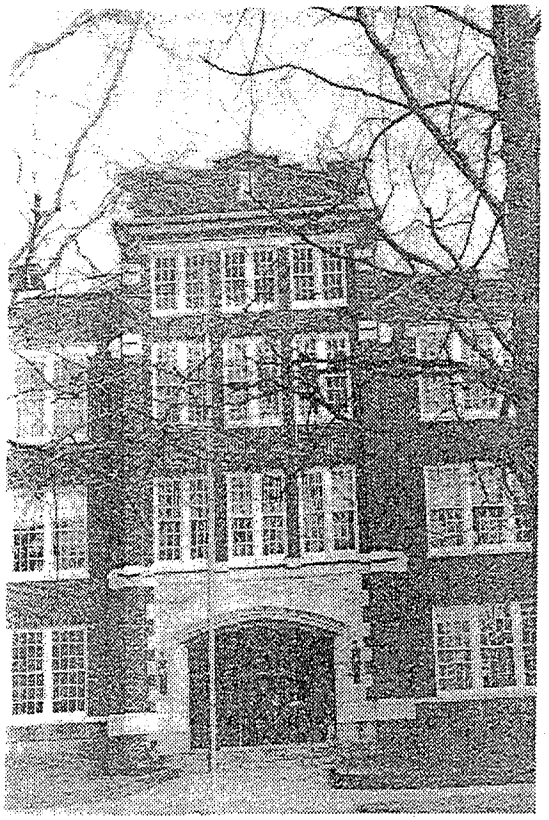
Asheville, N.C. 28802, Tuesday Evening, September 14, 1976

A Slow Day

Poll clerk Mrs. Freddie Hopper at Asheville No. 16 precinct at West Asheville Community Center didn't have much to deal with in the way of voters today as predictions of a light turnout appeared justified in the early balloting in Buncombe County. Voters are deciding statewide runoffs in the Republican race for governor and the Democratic races for lieutenant governor, auditor and commissioner of labor as well as in Democratic runoffs for the nomination from the 11th Congressional District and for three seats on the expanded Buncombe County Board of Commissioners. (Staff Photo by Malcolm Gamble)

Ted Carter

Hall Fletcher, David Millard Rivalry Recalled



Hall Fletcher School

One of the landmarks of public school edcuation in Asheville in now fading into the pages of History. The historic old Hall Fletcher School in West Asheville, named for Dr. Hall Fletcher, a noted physician, is now being torn down to make way for a new middle school building.

Hall Fletcher has an epic history. It was opened in 1925 during Asheville's greatest period of educational expansion as a new high school for West Asheville, to balance East Asheville's David Millard High School.

In 1928 the new Asheville High School on McDowell Street was ready and Hall Fletcher, along with David Millard became the city junior high schools. In 1934 the depression hit the city so hard it couldn't buy coal to heat the senior high school, so it was closed and Hall Fletcher, along with David Millard, became temporary senior high schools again.

It wasn't long, however, before the senior high was opened again and Hall Fletcher entered a period of greatness as a junior high school. A superb rivalry developed between the "Rebels" and the David Millard "Terriers".

The rivalry mirrored the feelings of the two sections of the town. It continued with the students on into senior high school where elections for student officers often were split between students from those two schools, Hall Fletcher vs. David Millard all over again. It also took place in the memberships of the athletic teams in spite of the coaches' wishes.

The rivalry between the two junior high schools was best illustrated in the athletic contests during the 20 years that the stern, correct, erect Tom Hunt was principal of Hall Fletcher and rotund George "Dutch" Leonard presided at David Millard.

The two were great friends, but terrific competitors. Those were the years of the Mighty Mites football team, combined from the two schools and coached first by Woody Griffin, then Joe Eblen and Marvin Nockrow and finally Herb Coman. There have never been greater junior high school football teams.

Asheville High School was flooded with a wealth of football

TED CARTER

material. The Mites were then disbanded by new state high school regulations and both schools fielded teams. They still tell tales of classic games the schools played against each other. Football games at Asheville's Memorial Stadium were so popular and so many people attended them that they became spectacular pageants that were the envy of even the Asheville High School coaches.

The basketball games between the schools were also popular, but David Millard's gym was so small there was room for only a few spectators. Rebel fans still chuckle about how Hall Fletcher put one over on David Millard (Tom Hunt vs. Dutch Leonard). David Millard was hosting an afternoon game with the Rebels. Principal Hunt let his school out early and hauled the students to David Millard in buses, where they came in the back way and tiptoed quietly into the tiny gym. They were all seated when Leonard dismissed his school. When the David Millard Terrier fans tried to get in the gym, there was no room for them. Hall Fletcher had all the seats! It was that kind of fun and glory, the years of the two junior high schools.

Principals at Hall Fletcher following Hunt were Floyd Woody, Robert Phillips, Bill Pate and Woodrow Ramsey. The friendly rivalry between the schools died when the schools were integrated and South French Broad became the city's only junior high school. David Millard was sold, then torn down and Hall Fletcher became a middle school.

The city lost something with the ending of the friendly rivalry. Most students who passed through Hall Fletcher Junior High School will never forget those years. They are often, in spite of themselves, still partial to "West Asheville community affairs like p It goes directly back t school years.

They're still Hall F Rebels and they still brag the teachers they had th like Bill Plemmons who taught science, and met h at Hall Fletcher. He uti went on to become presi Appalachian State Univ They brag about the athletes who learned basics at Hall Fletch players like Winifred M Jim Mills, Red Landers them), Carl Cauble, Bus Pete Watts, Jim Penley, Owens, Otis McIntosh, N Dan Gruetter, Larry B Zack Pinner, Mike O'(Dave Cheadle, Charles Lonnie Turner, Harol Frank Plemmons, Dor saway, Philip Hanbacl Dickerson, the Rose bo the Resslars.

Coaching them were n Griffin, Eblen, Nockow, Nicholson, Johnny Lee a Penley.

The lists go on and on names are legion.

They wrote the song - Hall Fletcher story.

Asheville Citizen July 6, 1977

Bruce Emory
Research

Summer Camp Meeting

Annual Event At Eliada Home

By SHERI PARKS
Citizen-Times Staff Writer

The story of Eliada Home for Children is a love story, but not only a story of the love between the children and adults who lived and worked there, but of a community which cared enough to share its wealth. A C-T 7/31/77

This, in essence, will be the theme of the Eliada story as the Home plays host to its 67th summer camp meeting through August 7. As always the summer meeting is hailed as a vacation with a Christain purpose.

The "home for the homeless" was founded in 1903 by Rev. Lucius Compton, a local minister, "for the purpose of giving a Christian home to nobody's baby and to the homeless and most dependent child."

He began with one shabby cabin and four acres of land on the west side of town and named it "Eliada" which means "one whom God cares for."

The Rev. Compton often said that his children's home was founded by faith and continued to grow that way. He kept financial support coming in by traveling around the state, and eventually around the world, to preach, always refusing to beg for money.

According to an Asheville Citizen article on May 16, 1944, four years before the Rev. Compton's death, "It was his proud boast that he never asked the community of Asheville nor Buncombe County for a cent."

By 1938, the home's property included 117 acres of farmland, which grew to 400 acres by 1944. The farmland was used to produce food for about 100 children, capital, and agricultural training for the boys. The girls studied homemaking. They all attended school in the home's schoolbuilding.

As the home began to grow, the Rev. Compton invited fellow Christian followers from all over the country to an annual summer camp meeting. There was no charge for food or other provisions.

And the people came, year after year, first in wagons, then in cars, to worship in a speedily constructed wooden church and sleep in tents at night.

Each night for 10 days, after folks from the local community had joined the camp meeting, a fire and brimstone preacher would preach and stalk back and forth across the altar and invite the unsaved to come to the front and kneel in the hay. There are more than a few Asheville residents who remember being taken to the summer camp meetings as children. The community con-

tinued to support Eliada throughout the rest of the year and somehow the school managed to survive until fairly recently without any kind of state aid because of community help. Time after time, it came through with money for buildings, clothes, free medical care and trips to the zoo.

In 1958, at Easter, Mrs. Harland Sluder and the Missionary Society of West Side Christian Church delivered 58 girls' dresses, 42 crinoline petticoats, 44 pairs of childrens' socks and 40 boys' tee shirts. Mrs. Sluder had crocheted and sold ornamental slippers to get enough money for dress material and had personally sewn 40 dresses in a month.

In 1965, the home received eight deer, one bear and large supplies of ice cream, frozen vegetables, bread and beef—all in one week. There was so much food for a while that commercial freezers had to be rented.

The children received free medical checkups each year and in 1965, so many dentists volunteered to look after their dental needs, there weren't enough children. The reduction is partially due to policy change and partially due to the fact that social and economic changes have led to more children being kept at home when there is one parent.

Archibald Cameron, director, says that the childrens' home does not attempt to replace the atmosphere of a private home, adding that some children adjust better in a group home.

There is a gymnaisum, and a swimming pool and farm work is being deemphasized. The smaller children still attend school at Eliada, but the older students attend public high schools.

The camp meetings are still held every summer, minus most of the fire and brimstone and a new tabernacle is to be dedicated Sunday at 3 p.m., as the highlight of this year's camp meeting taking place through August 7.

But if Eliada's face has changed, its heart has not. Many of the children there now could have written this excerpt from a letter written by Virginia, an Eliada resident in 1951.

"Eliada is a home where we can go and leave our troubles behind. I didn't realize Eliada could mean so much to me. I guess I'll always call it home."

7-31-1977

Money In Junk

By NANCY BROWER

Eleven-year-old Billy Gene Hagan went down to the stockyards by the river where country folk come to swap and sell with $2 in his jeans.

NANCY BROWER

He bought an ooga horn from a Model-A Ford, sold it for $6, bought a .22 rifle, swapped the rifle for "a whole table full of stuff," kept selling until he had $14 in cash, an electric razor and a double-barreled shotgun to show for his one-day fling as a buyer and seller of castoffs. A-T 4/28/78

Now 32, Billy Gene Hagan is known as Crazy Bill, the junk dealer. He is also a licensed auctioneer. It was Hagan and his wife, Linda, who found the Thomas Wolfe letters — 12 of them — in the remains of the George McCoy estate, which they bought for $1,600. Hagan sold 10 handwritten letters by the Asheville author to a South Carolina collector who donated them to St. Mary's College in Raleigh. The sale price was $6,000.

Obviously, there is money to be made in junk. "We don't get rich," Hagan said, "but we make a good living. I wouldn't work on a job. I do better at this."

After that heady day at the stockyards, the boy was hooked on a career of wheeling and dealing. When he was 12 years old, he sold an entire warehouse full of mismatched socks. "One time I had a lifeboat off a ship full of big plastic bags of those socks. I sold them for 50 cents a bag. There was not a pair in the bunch, but it was a real buy for a one-legged man. I sold thousands of socks, emptied the warehouse and made several hundred dollars. Being a kid, I blew all the money."

Salaried Job Shortlived

Hagan dropped out of school at 14 and struck out for Florida on his own. He went to work as an usher in a Jacksonville theater. "It was my first real job," Hagan said, "but they ran 'Pinocchio' the whole time I was there and after two weeks I couldn't stand it any more."

Eventually, he was back in Asheville and back in the junk business. "I've been in and out of it all my life," Hagan said. Currently, he runs an auction house on Emma Road where he attracts buyers with wildly assorted items and show biz tactics.

When bidding is slow, Hagan "gongs" the audience. Faded arrangements of plastic flowers often make their way to junk dealers. Hagan auctions them unabashedly, saying, "I've been to the graveyard again."

Used clothing is the most difficult to get bids on, so Hagan has employees parade around in the most outlandish of the garments. He has in stock a tall silk hat and a black clawhammer coat, the donning of which turns the wearer into an instant "Abe Lincoln."

Hagan refuses to sell animals, but has been known to sell the leash and throw in the dog, sell the crate and throw in the chicken. "I once auctioned a pet, deodorized skunk," he said, "except that I sold the cage and gave the skunk to the person who bought it."

Asheville Times April 28, 1978

Rankin School To Close

By DIANE SECHREST
Times Staff Writer

Despite the objections of parents and teachers, the Asheville City Board of Education voted Monday night to close Rankin Elementary School on Stewart Street at the end of the school year.

The vote came after several weeks of discussions with Rankin teachers and PTA representatives, and after what board chairman Everette W. Clark Jr. said was careful study by the board. A-T 5/9/78

The school will be closed because of dwindling enrollment and a possible savings of $60,000 to the school system. Rankin's 200 students will be transferred to Vance and Aycock schools. Rankin's teachers will be used elsewhere in the system.

Ironically, Rankin was built in the 1920s to relieve overcrowding at Vance and Aycock.

Ted Carter

Horse Racing Once Thrived In Asheville

Once upon a time Asheville had a big race track and was a center of horse racing. Men of sporting blood organized a racing association that held three-day meets drawing thousands of spectators as well as thoroughbreds and stables from all over the south.

A-T 6/13/78

The name of the sporting group was the French Broad Racing Association. The race track was called Carrier Field and was located in the big sandy bottom along the French Broad River where the Asheville stock car speedway is now. The track also served as a fairground and a center for baseball. Bicycle races and trotting races were held there as well as big "tournaments." Carrier Field was perhaps Asheville's first amusement park. The years were the 1890s. The prime mover of all the action was Edwin George Carrier, a millionaire Yankee who was also the founding father of West Asheville.

West Asheville had its beginnings along about 1827 when sulphur springs were discovered a few miles west of the river by Robert Henry, the teacher who was the first to establish a school in the area (Newton School on Biltmore Avenue).

In 1830 Col. Reuben Deaver moved in and built a hotel on the hill overlooking Hominy Creek (near Asheville School). He developed the springs as a spa and year after year added wings to his hotel along with many cottages, establishing a popular resort. Charleston people came to it for the summer. The colonel had bowling alleys, billiard rooms, banquet halls and ballrooms with live orchestras playing for the dances.

Sulphur Springs became known far and wide and attracted as many as 500 guests at one time. The hotel burned in 1862, during the Civil War years, and nothing was done to replace it until the railroad arrived in Asheville in 1880.

Edwin George Carrier was a passenger on a train passing through Asheville on his way to Florida in 1885. He admired the local climate and the scenery, so he decided to settle here.

Carrier was born in Summerville, Pa., in 1829. He early entered the lumber business with his father. In 1861 he moved to Michigan where he amassed a fortune in the lumber business.

After he arrived in town he purchased 1,200 acres of land west and north of the French Broad River, including Sulphur Springs. He organized the West Asheville Improvement Company, laid out streets, sold lots and began the development of West Asheville.

TED CARTER

In 1887 he erected a hotel on the site of Deaver's old establishment. It became one of the most popular places in the mountains. First known as Carrier Springs, its name was soon changed to The Belmont. It was ultra modern and contained the first elevator in the south.

In 1889 Carrier built a dam across Hominy Creek and installed a 60-horsepower turbine and 40-kilowatt generator, the first hydroelectric plant in Western North Carolina. It furnished electricity for the hotel with some left over for the City of Asheville. He also constructed a 250-foot bridge (Carrier Bridge) across the French Broad River. At the time of its construction it was one of the wonders of the area.

In 1890 he built the West Asheville and Sulphur Springs electric railway. The tracks ran from the Southern Railway depot across Carrier Bridge, along Amboy Road to Hominy Creek then up to Hotel Belmont. The electricity from his hydroelectric plant powered it and it was built to serve his hotel.

He built the race track along the river mainly for his guests, but the track soon began to attract guests from other hotels — the Battery Park in Asheville and the big hotel in Hot Springs.

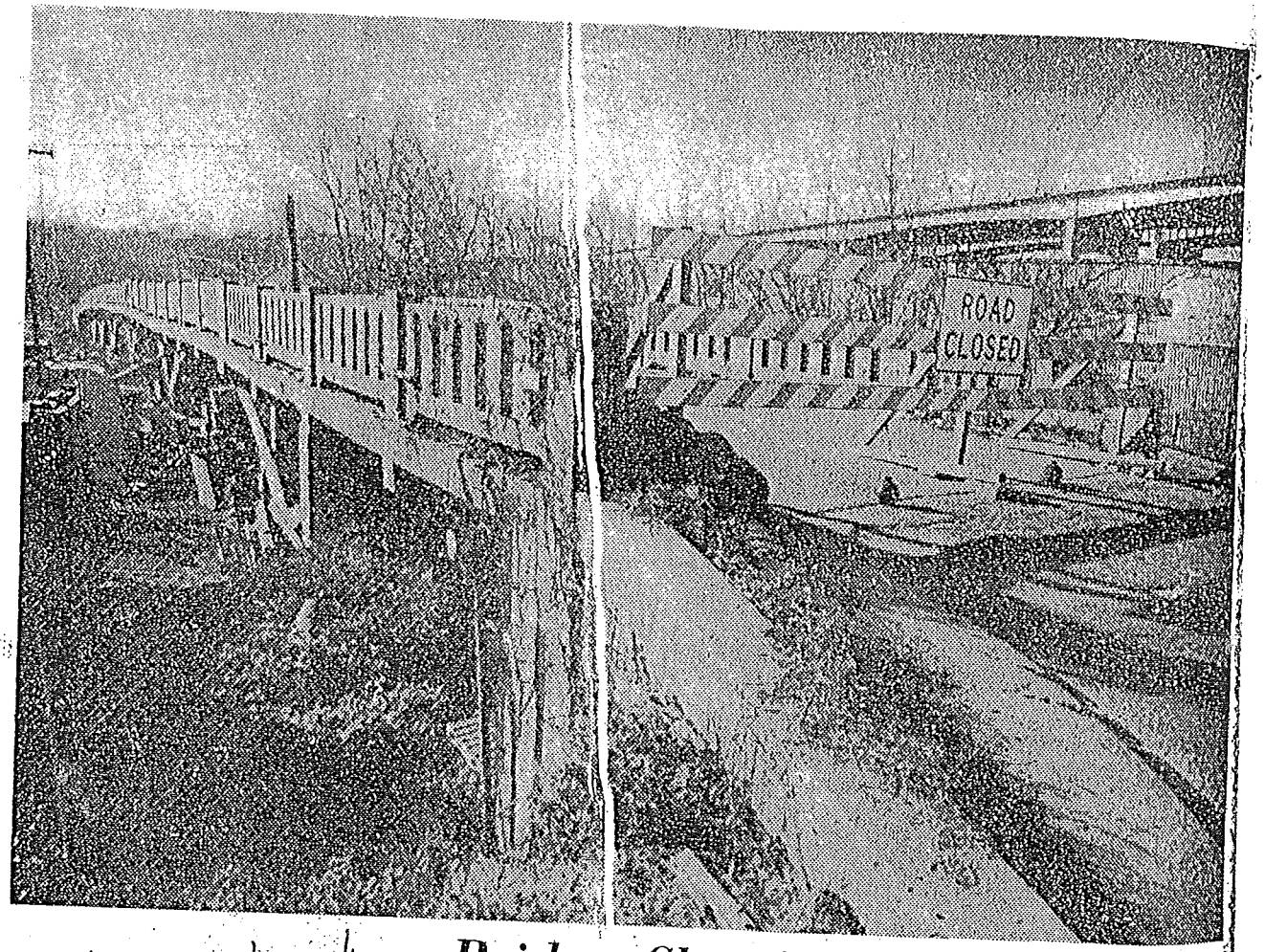
Then disaster struck. The hotel had been leased to Dr. Carl Von Ruck in October 1891, but on Aug. 24, 1892, it burned to the ground.

Carrier had other achievements locally. He was the first man to pioneer modern dairying and cattle raising. He introduced purebred Hereford and Jersey cattle into the area from Kentucky. He promoted the planting of orchards. He introduced scientific farming.

The town he helped develop continued to grow and prosper after he left the area, disheartened by the loss of his hotel plus a freeze of his orange groves in Florida.

West Asheville was incorporated as a sanitary district in 1911 and as a town in 1913. It was taken into the City of Asheville in 1917.

Carrier died in 1927 and was buried in Riverside Cemetery.



A-C 11/28/78

Bridge Closed

The old Smith Bridge at the Old Haywood and Craven streets intersection in West Asheville has been closed to traffic, its fate yet to be determined by officials from the North Carolina Department of Transportation. The road will be closed indefinitely while DOT officials decide if the time-worn bridge should be replaced or repaired. Meanwhile, motorists have their choice between the new Haywood Street Bridge or the Crosstown Expressway, both of which are near the old structure. (Staff Photo by Gary Fields)

Aston Park Plan Is Rejected By Review Group

By JIM STINGLEY
Citizen Staff Writer

The Western North Carolina Health Systems Agency's Project Review Committee, meeting Wednesday night in the S & W Cafeteria, voted not to approve plans for a $1.5 million Aston Park medical facility.

The committee, by an 8 to 3 vote with one member abstaining, made its decision based on the fact that approval of the 120-bed facility would cause the committee to exceed a state bed plan that allows only so many beds in this area. Because the bed plan has been adopted by the agency, the committee could not, members agreed, violate it. A-C

Also, they said, they could not vote for the facility because the board of directors of the proposed nursing center could not demonstrate there was enough need for the extra beds — enough for them to override the bed plan.

Further, they said, the lack of a demonstration of need would not foster cost and payment, which is to say they could not determine if the cost of the facility would, when passed on to the recipients of the facility's services, be in line.

Attorney Charles R. Worley, a member of the Aston Park board of directors, and O. Claude Smith, chairman of the board, were clearly puzzled at the committee's decision.

"We don't really understand why they took that stand concerning the state bed plan," Worley said. "And we don't understand that we haven't demonstrated a need for this facility. And we don't understand why they would be concerned about cost and payment.

"First," he said, "we are a non-profit organization and that means from the front that we are only interested in providing services to our community, not in how much money we're going to make. 12/7/78

"Second, if we haven't already demonstrated the need, I don't know how else we can do it. We have held a public hearing at which a lot of people attended and no one person objected or opposed what we plan to do. Instead, it was the other way around. And strongly so.

"Third," he said, "what they are doing is using the same bed plan that they used to approve our 1976 facility plan to disapprove this one."

Worley explained that the board, in 1976, drew up plans for the facility and the agency approved them then, even though they exceeded the state bed plan. But the cost of the facility, $2.7 million then, proved excessive and they had to back out and re-think the matter.

By backing out, that voided the agency's approval and put them in the position of having to reapply when they finally came up with their new plans.

"So we don't quite understand this inconsistency in their action," Smith said. "Particularly since nothing has been built since we gave our first plans up and nothing has been approved or even applied for since then."

Worley said the action Wednesday night would not deter the board from taking the matter to the agency's planning body, which will meet Wednesday in the Great Smokies Hilton and has the power to override the committee vote.

Asheville Citizen December 7, 1978

The Ice Houses

With the thermometer registering seven degrees and a cold north wind lowering the chill factor below zero, Wednesday morning seemed as good a time as any to talk about ice houses.

TERRELL

Before ice companies began to manufacture ice here, those who could afford it preserved ice from the winter through the following summer. The people who could not afford it suffered through the sweltering summers without it.

"Ice houses" were common among the wealthy. A handful of monied gentry in Asheville, including Richmond Pearson and George W. Vanderbilt, had ice houses in which ice cut from frozen ponds in January and February was stored for use through the summer and until the weather froze the ponds over again.

In the days before and just after the turn of the 20th Century, the largest collection of ice houses in the mountain area lay in the Flat Rock area where wealthy Charlestonians summered in the cool of the mountains.

Cold Winter Of 1909

K. G. "Pat" Patterson, 32 Lowell Street, remembers the ice houses.

"My father," Pat said, "was caretaker of the MacMillian C. King estate in Flat Rock. My uncle, Creight Thomas, was caretaker of the J. P. K. Bryan estate, and his brother was caretaker of the Judge King place, all in the same area.

"There was a small lake on the MacMillian King place and ice for all three of those estates, and perhaps for others, came from the lake.

"In the winter of 1909, I watched them cut ice 16 inches thick from the lake and store it in their ice houses. They said that was the thickest ice they ever cut."

The ice-cutting operation demanded the services of most of the hands from the three estates.

"First," Pat said, "they would 'sound' the ice to see how thick it was. They would do this by boring a hole with a huge augur. If the ice were more than eight inches thick, they went on with the operation. Ice less than eight inches wouldn't stand the summer.

"After auguring a hole through the ice, they sawed it out a block at a time with ice saws. An ice saw was a special saw with a large blade. It had handles turned like those of a lawn mower, and a good man could rip out a block of ice quickly.

"When a block was sawed, someone lifted it out of the lake with tongs and skidded it to the bank where others put it in a sled.

"It was cold work, and they always kept a bonfire burning on the shore. A man would saw for awhile and then go stand by the fire to get warm while someone else sawed.

"When the sled was loaded, they hauled it to the ice house and stored it."

The Intriguing Part

There began the intriguing part of the story. What sort of a house" would preserve ice through the summer?

"All the ice houses in Flat Rock," Pat said, "were built under those huge white pine trees which kept the hot sun off the houses as much as possible.

"The ice houses I remember were about 12 to 15 feet deep and two-thirds of the depth was below ground. The walls were rocked up to ground level and from there to the roof they were made of wooden boards. The walls above ground were thickly insulated with sawdust.

"The roof was octagonal, and it seems to me like it was a tar roof.

"It took a lot of sawdust to preserve ice. My father started hauling it in early fall so he would have enough by January.

"He started with a layer of sawdust a foot deep on the floor of the ice house, then put in a layer of blocks of ice, spacing them a few inches apart and filling the spaces with sawdust. Then he put in another layer of sawdust and another layer of ice, and so on until he had the ice house filled.

"At the front of the ice house was a door set back in an entrance way with a long steel rod running in and a wheel mounted on the rod. A block of ice would be speared with tongs, pulled up on a rope and wheeled out along the rod.

Cleaned Each Year

"The ice house had to be cleaned out each year, and I can remember those huge piles of blackened sawdust outside after the cleaning. Fresh sawdust had to be used every year, else the ice would melt.

"I've seen them drag big blocks of ice out of the ice house in July, wash the sawdust off, and the ice would be as clear as crystal.

"Also, I've seen them clean out the ice houses in the fall and haul away two or three wagonloads of unused ice. That's how well it kept in those houses."

Ice cutting on the lakes lasted until World War I when roads were improved to the point that ice trucks could deliver ice to whoever needed it.

"My grandchildren and nieces and nephews," Pat said, "keep saying it couldn't have been as cold back then as it is now, but in that winter of 1909 and in other winters, I remember the French Broad River freezing over so solidly that men drove big, loaded log wagons across the river at Penrose, Blantyre, Etowah, and Horse Shoe. Since bridges were few and far between in that section, and roads were so bad in wet weather, that folks waited till the ground froze to haul out their logs and crossties, and so forth.

"And that's also when ice-cutting time was at hand. Those were busy days."

Asheville Citizen January 4, 1979

Aston Park Facility Is Approved

By JIM STINGLEY
Citizen-Times Staff Writer

The North Carolina Health Planning and Development Agency has approved plans for the $1.5 million, 120-bed nursing home to be constructed on the Rhododendron Park site in West Asheville by Aston Park Hospital, Inc.

News of the approval came Friday night from Charles R. Worley, a member of the executive committee of the board of directors of the hospital group. A C+T 2/10/79

Worley said construction of the facility, which will have 60 skilled nursing beds and 60 intermediate care beds, will begin within 90 days and that the facility should be open by the fall of 1980.

The nursing home, to be called the Aston Park Health Care Center, is the culmination of years of effort on the part of Aston Park Hospital supporters to build a new hospital in Asheville. The old Aston Park Hospital closed its doors in 1975 after 53 years of operation.

Worley said Friday night that officials of the hospital "were extremely pleased to learn the news."

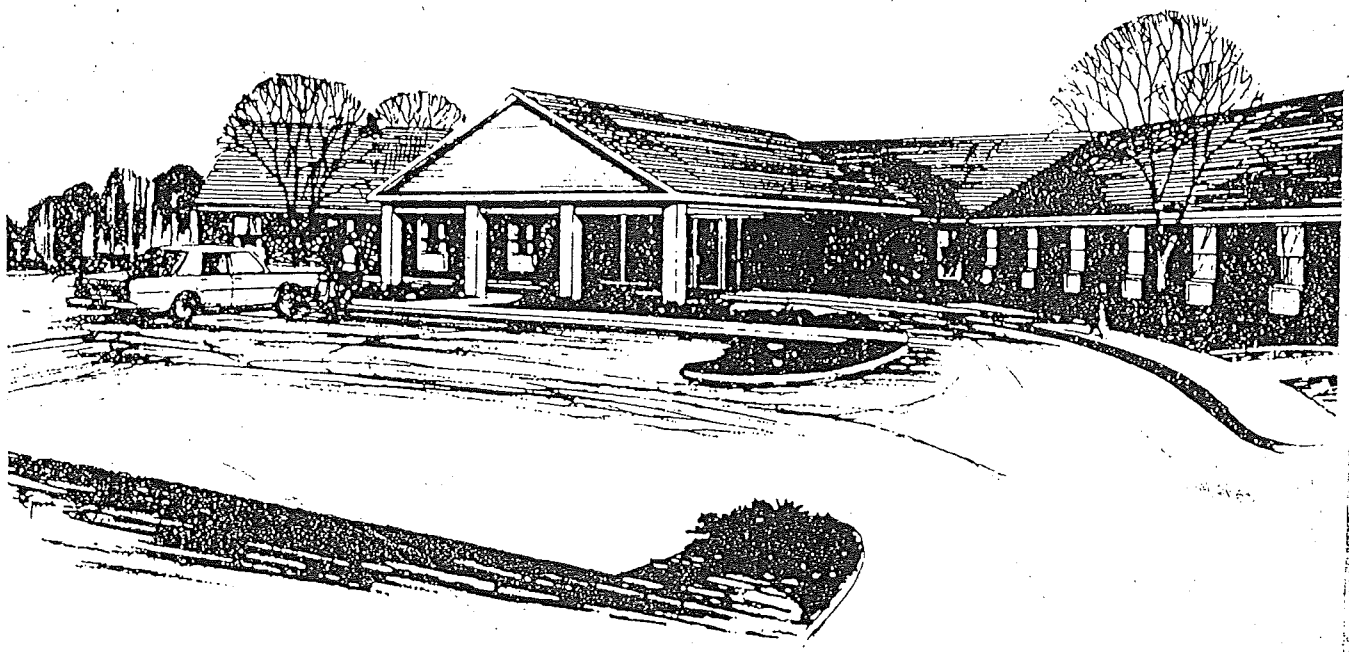
"It is something the entire board has been working on for many years," Worley said, "and this is the first time we can see the project end in sight."

Plans to build some kind of health care facility in Rhododendron Park go back to 1975, the year that the old hospital closed its doors because of financial losses.

At that time, hospital officials began studying the possiblity of some sort of long term care facility that would serve Buncombe and surrounding counties with 120 beds.

In May of 1976, the state agency approved plans for the nursing care facility by issuing a certificate of need. The cost then was put at $1,875,320.

Asheville Citizen February 10, 1979



Aston Park Nursing Center

A C-T 7/8/79

Construction is under way on the Aston Park Nursing Center in the old Rhododendron Park site in West Asheville. It will look like this sketch when completed, with the opening planned for May of 1980. The 120-bed skilled nursing and intermediate care facility is expected to cost approximately $1.5 million. It is being built by Aston Park Hospital Inc., which has sold the old hospital on Hilliard Avenue.

Asheville Citizen July 8, 1979

1980 - 1989

New Health Care Center Will Have An Old Name

By RALPH V. ELLIS
Staff Writer

The new Aston Park Health Care Center opens for business Wednesday, almost five years after the closing of its namesake, Aston Park Hospital.

The people who run the 120-bed nursing home in West Asheville hope to carry over the reputation for personalized care for which the hospital was known. But they hope to become known for other reasons. A-C 4/21/80

The Aston Park governing board and the Mountain Area Health Care Center have agreed to share resources, thus creating an educational-therapeutic center unique to the region, said Aston Park administrator Emmett Goldsmith.

"They will provide instructors and teachers and Aston Park will provide a clinical base for those students," Goldsmith said. "It will open up a new avenue for us to have students come in and see how a nursing home operates.

"To our knowledge it's not available elsewhere in the area."

Doctors from the family practice center at MAHEC will make up most of the utilization review committee, which will develop criteria for admitting patients to Aston Park. Dr. Richard Walton of the family practice center will serve as Aston Park medical director.

The $1.5 million facility will be open to the public Tuesday at 11 a.m. The building is located on 69 acres on the old Rhododendron Park site off Brevard Road.

The one-story, X-shaped building will have 60 beds for intermediate care patients, 60 beds for skilled care patients, physical therapy equipment, dining room, beauty shop and gift shop — all painted in bright colors. Nurses' stations and other treatment facilities will be located in the middle of the building, giving personnel a clear view down each of the color-coded hallways.

The center has four private rooms, the rest are semi-private rooms with two beds each. Each room has a bathroom with sink and toilet facilities. Bathing will be done in large shower rooms or in the room with a large bathtub.

Daily semi-private room rates for intermediate care patients will be $29, for skilled care patients $35. The nursing home should qualify for Medicaid payments in a few weeks, Medicare payments in several months, Goldsmith said. The daily room rates include activities, three meals a day and other routine services.

Goldsmith said Aston Park already has a waiting list of 75 intermediate care patients and about half a dozen skilled care patients. With a full house of patients, the staff would number about 65, with 31 of those workers being nurses, he said. Nurses will be on duty 24 hours a day and at least one doctor will be on call all day, as required by laws governing nursing homes. The yearly payroll should run about $670,000, Goldsmith said.

Dave DeArmond, chairman of the Aston Park board building committee, said the building was financed with a $1,080,000 loan from First Union Bank. He said the board could have borrowed from another source outside the county at higher interest rates but got the more economical First Union loan after St. Joseph's Hospital threw its support to Aston Park. The two institutions have a transfer agreement.

"As long as we can accomodate their patients we'll take them," Goldsmith explained. "As long as they can take ours they will."

The remainder of the bill will be paid for with approximately $600,000 the Aston Park board got from the Tri-Hospital Fund, a fund-raising project Aston Park participated in during the late 1960s and early 1970s with Memorial Mission and St. Joseph's hospitals. The two large hospitals each got 40 percent of the funds and Aston Park got 20 percent.

The Aston Park board of trustees have held that money in the bank since Aston Park Hospital, located at the corner of Hilliard Avenue and South French Broad Avenue, closed in 1975.

"The hospital had been floundering for a number of years. Sometimes we'd lose money and sometimes we'd make money," explained DeArmond. The old four-story building, built in 1927, had to be replaced, he said.

The old hospital had other problems. Goldsmith said some Asheville doctors would not send patients there because of the age and size of the building. Also, it was not located near the two major hospitals and the numerous doctors' offices in the Biltmore Avenue area.

"The Aston Park board was at first reluctant to build a nursing home," Goldsmith said. "For 10 or 12 years they had their sights set on building a hospital."

The board went so far as to break ground for a 200-bed, $6.8 million general hospital in November 1971 at Rhododendron Park. That plan, like other plans for hospitals or medical centers, died because of financial problems, dissension in the Asheville medical community over the purpose and location of a new hospital and government red tape.

During these years of struggle, even when there was no facility bearing the Aston Park name, the board kept meeting and making plans. The hospital ladies' auxiliary kept meeting and raising money.

Goldsmith said the Aston Park board was originally against construction of a nursing home because of the poor reputation such facilities have with the public. But when it became clear they could build a nursing home that would be different from other nursing homes — partly because of the MAHEC connection — the board went ahead with plans.

The old Aston Park Hospital building was purchased about a year ago by Drs. William D. Schutte and William A. Bryan III, the physicians who run the Childrens' Medical Center of Asheville, now located in the Doctors' Building next to Memorial Mission.

Bryan said he and Schutte intend to move their practice there after renovation. They should be there by late 1981, he said.

"There will also be a unique health service not currently provided in Western North Carolina," Bryan said.

Asheville Citizen April 21, 1980

Aston Park Property Medical Office Home

By SANDY HOYLE BOLICK
Staff Writer

Renovation and new construction to turn the old Aston Park Hospital into a medical office condominium began this week.

The "Aston Park Center," as the facility will be named, should be completed by June, 1981, according to Dr. William A. Bryan. A-T 9/18/80

Bryan, along with Drs. Harold D. Schutte, Martha A. Claxton and Robert D. Sewell who operate the Children's Medical Center, and orthopedic Drs. David L. Jarrett and Larry L. Kroll, will be the first occupants of the new office facility.

In addition, a newly-formed, non-profit organization, Carolina HealthCare, Inc., will be located in the Aston Park Center.

According to Bryan, Carolina HealthCare, staffed by physicians and paramedical personnel, is designed to teach healthful living and preventive medicine. Programs dealing with coping with stress, alcohol and drug abuse, stop-smoking, weight reduction, parenting and others which will aid in healthier living will be offered.

"To our knowledge, there is no such total program in preventive health care operating in Western North Carolina," Bryan said. "There are parts of the program, such as stop-smoking clinics and weight reduction, but no one seems to have pulled it all together."

Bryan said Carolina HealthCare is presently operating out of the Children's Medical Center, a pediatric practice located in the Doctors Building.

However, Carolina HealthCare offers programs for the elderly, working people, parents and teen-agers, as well as the young child, Bryan said.

Future plans for Aston Park Center call for additional health-related programs such as a nutrition center, a small restaurant and a book nook.

Carolina HealthCare was conceived in line with trends to make a healthier America through health education, according to Bryan and doctors involved in the formation of the program.

"Ironically," Bryan said, "people can prevent disease and reduce health care costs through healthy living.

"We quote the United States Surgeon General, Julius Richmond," Bryan continued, "who has said 'Improvement in the health status of our citizens will not be made through the treatment of disease, but rather through prevention'."

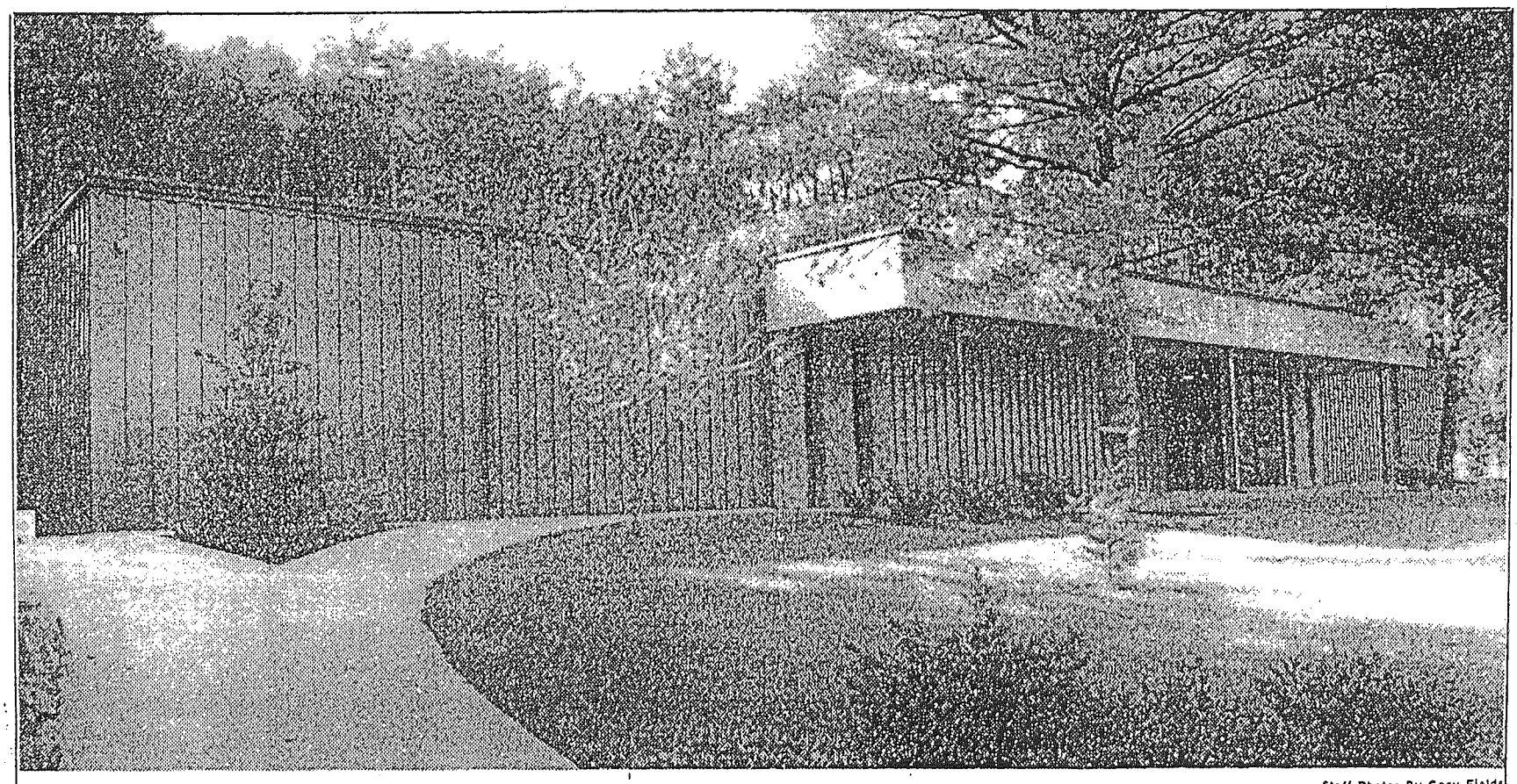
Bryan and Schutte purchased Aston Park Hospital in April, 1979. Recently, Jarrett and Kroll have become co-owners. Two properties adjacent to the hospital, including the old Salvation Army house, also have been purchased to provide for possible future development.

Architectural work for the renovation and new construction to the old hospital is by Spaceplan of Asheville, with Carroll Hughes serving as chief architect. Duyck Construction of Asheville is contractor for the project.

Asheville Times September 18, 1980

ASHEVILLE CITIZEN-TIMES

Sunday, Oct. 12, 1980



—Staff Photos By Gary Fields

New Home Of Cecils Junior College Off Patton Avenue In West Asheville

Cecils Is Alive And Growing

AC-T 10/12/80

John South Sees Recruiting As Key To The Turnaround Of A Dying School

By JOHN CAMPBELL JR.
Staff Writer

Cecils Junior College is alive and growing today on its own campus off Patton Avenue under the direction of owner and President John T. South Jr. But it wasn't that way in 1972 when South purchased the business college.

In 1972, the school was Cecils Business College. The college rented facilities on North French Broad Avenue and enrollment had dipped to 35 students.

"It was on its last legs," South said recently.

When South purchased Cecils, he had a history of buying dying business colleges and giving them new life. A native of Nashville, Tenn., South came to Asheville from Lakeland, Fla., Junior College. Known as the Lakeland College of Business and Fashion when South bought it, the school grew from 17 students to more than 600 under his direction.

South's first moves at Cecils Business College were to upgrade its faculty, then its curriculum.

"We hired faculty members with college degrees," South said. "We changed the curriculum, making it an all-college curriculum."

In less that a year, Cecils was upgraded to full business college accreditation. An advertising campaign was started and area high school students were actively recruited. Enrollment grew and within a year Cecils was forced to rent another floor of the North French Broad building.

In 1974, Cecils applied to the board of governors of the University of North Carolina system for degree-granting authority. To assure a favorable ruling by the board, Cecils had to meet several requirements — all faculty members were to possess master's degrees, a 5,000-volume library was needed and general education courses were added to the school's curriculum.

A provisional license was granted to Cecils in 1975 and two years later the board of governors issued the school a permanent license to grant associate degrees.

Meanwhile, Cecils had become a candidate for junior college status and in August 1976 Cecils Business College officially became Cecils Junior College. The same year, South purchased eight acres of land off Patton Avenue and construction started. The first class in the new facility was held May 2, 1977.

South has been able to turn Cecils Junior College into a modern, well-equipped place of learning without any financial assistance from local, state or federal agencies.

"We have no tax support and we receive no endowments," he said. "This school is 100 percent privately funded."

Despite the lack of government funding, Cecils has continued to expand, enjoying more than $50,000 in capital improvements in the past year.

Because of the lack of state and federal funds, however Cecils Junior College's fees are slightly higher than government-supported schools in the area with comparable course listings.

"We sell Chevrolets and they give away Fords down the street," is the way South puts it.

"With higher fees, we have to be certain we offer educational services good enough to justify the price difference," he said.

A likely indicator would be enrollment, and Cecils now boasts a student body of approximately 400. The school's faculty has grown to 23, all with master's degree in addition, two professionally-trained student counselors are employed on a full-time basis. The library has increased to 7,000 volumes. Cecils has started a basketball team and a student newspaper is published once a month.

South has obviously done something right in Lakeland and in Asheville. What is the key to turning a school around, from a downhill slide to success?

"I would say developing a good recruiting program, primarily," said South. "That and offering students a solid, well-rounded education."

Cecils Junior College still focuses on the business world, but general education courses comprise 25 percent of each student's schedule.

Students at Cecils can pursue an associate of applied science degree, a two-year degree, with a major in marketing and management, accounting or secretarial science. The majors are interrelated and students in any of the three majors must complete courses in basic accounting, mathematics, office machines, typewriting and basic business law.

The college offers two-year diplomas for majors in general business, legal office administrative assistant, medical office administrative assistant and travel careers, a new program designed to ready the student for employment with a travel agency, an increasingly popular field.

Certificate programs are offered by Cecils, requiring two, three or four quarters of study in areas such as stenographic, clerk-typist, junior accounting and legal or medical secretarial.

Students may also choose to pursue a certificate of proficiency for individual courses such as typewriting, shorthand, keypunch or office machines.

General education courses include composition, political science, U.S. history, general psychology, effective speaking and principles of economics.

In all, Cecils offers 53 courses to its students, in any and all combinations.

But the bottom line for a Cecils graduate is employment — landing a job in the field of his or her choice.

Cecils maintains a student placement service to assist students and graduates in finding a job. Today's graduates are certified in specific technical skills and the ratio of graduates to open jobs is "solid" according to South.

President John T. South At His Desk

Robert T. Cecil founded his college to provide "office help" for businesses in the Asheville area, and the vast majority of Cecils graduates today seek work in business offices. And Cecils still can't turn out secretaries fast enough to meet the demand, according to Judy Reed, dean of academic affairs.

"There is a critical shortage in the secretarial field right now," Reed said. "Critical. We get more calls from employers around here than we usually can fill."

MALVERN HILLS POOL

OPERATIONS MANUAL

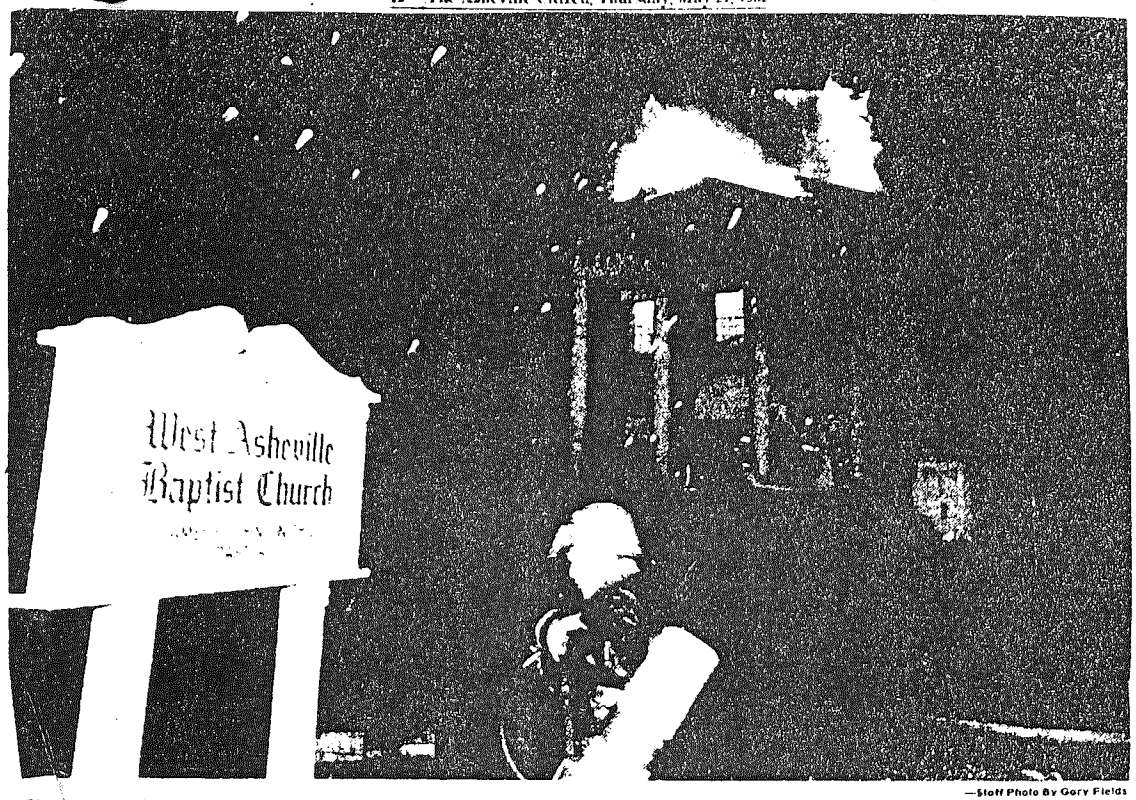
DESCRIPTION AND HISTORY

Malvern Hills Pool was bought by the City of Asheville in September, 1921, from Mr. and Mrs. Horney for $10.00. This makes the pool the oldest in Asheville. The pool used to be drained once a week and filled with new water because there was no filter system. In 1970, rapid-flow sand filters were placed at the pool and have been used to this day.

In 1970, also, new walls were placed in the pool, which reduced its size by seven inches, so that the size is now 149' 4" x 49' 5". The water capacity is 309,600 gallons.

In 1973 and 1974, extensive improvements were made to the pool, park and bathhouse. The bathhouse was completely remodeled inside with glazed tile concrete blocks, new fixtures and coin-operated lockers. A new fence and additional deck space were added to the pool and improvements to the park area included a new 30' x 60' picnic shelter, children's playground equipment, the conversion of the tennis courts from clay to asphaltic "Laykold", a new bridge across the creek, new walks, steps and landscaping. These improvements were made at a cost of approximately $85,000, funded by the Open Space program from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

revised edition - 1982 by: Jeff Joyce
District Supervisor
West Asheville



—Staff Photo By Gary Fields

Firefighters Carrying Equipment Arrive To Battle Blaze At West Asheville Baptist Church Late Wednesday

City Church Destroyed By Flames

Firefighter Missing

By MARK WEST
And JOHN CAMPBELL
Staff Writers

Flames possibly sparked by lightning destroyed the main section of the West Asheville Baptist Church Wednesday night. One firefighter was missing and feared dead and at least two others were injured fighting the fire which could be seen from downtown Asheville.

Officials feared the missing firefighter might have been trapped inside the burning church.

"There were three (firefighters) in there when the steeple collapsed. We've been able to account for two," said Jerry VeHaun, director of Emergency Medical Services. "We cannot confirm that there is indeed a man in there. There is little more that we can do except wait and see."

Sources at the scene said the missing firefighter was new in the department.

Just after midnight, crews began pulling back debris to attempt to enter the building to find out the fate of the firefighter who had been missing for almost two hours.

They were driven back from the flaming auditorium when the portion under the church's front columns began to crack.

Flames had destroyed the central section of the church at 926 Haywood Road by 11:30 p.m. and neither heavy rains nor the thousands of gallons of water pumped by firefighters could save it.

One of the injured firefighters was carried off in a stretcher suffering from a leg injury and smoke inhalation, VeHaun said.

Rick King of the Buncombe

— Turn To Page 12

Church Burns

— Continued From Page One

County Rescue Squad said the injured firefighters were taken to Memorial Mission Hospital. A hospital spokesman said two firefighters were being treated for smoke inhalation. Their names were not released.

At 10:45 p.m. Wednesday, flames were shooting 20-30 feet into the sky and coming out of the auditorium windows.

Firefighters from all of the city fire departments responded to the 10:16 p.m. call, but by 11 p.m. the fire was raging out of control.

A number of volunteer fire departments were also called in and were on standby duty and relieving city firefighters.

Shortly after 10:30 p.m., the steeple fell into the auditorium when the roof collapsed.

The fire engulfed the center of the brick church. Beyond the church's front four columns, all that could be seen were flames and rubble. Firefighters worked to save the side schoolroom portions of the church which were protected by firewalls at either side of the center section. The chapel, at the rear of the center section, was also protected by a firewall.

A woman at the scene said, "I heard a loud pop. The lightning was terrible popping like that. That was before all the smoke and fire started."

More than 100 passersby and onlookers crowded around the roped off portions of the hilly church lawn as firefighters knocked out windows and attempted to save the church's wings. Many stood without umbrellas.

Robert Garren, a church member for 40 years, said, "Fifty years of work — this has all been built since we've been members. It's hard to watch."

Electricity was turned off in residences adjacent to the church and firefighters sprayed nearby homes to keep them cool.

David McCurry, a student at Davidson College who lives two houses away from the church, said, "I drove by and smelled something like wood or paper burning and went home and looked around to see if it was our house. When the first truck pulled up they didn't know where the fire was. Then they pried the door open and went in with one hose. A few minutes later the fire broke through the roof and that was all she wrote."

Ricky Winter, 14, said his family was eating dinner about 9:30 when they heard a lightning pop. He said the family, which lives on Haywood Road across from the church, then began smelling smoke.

The church is located just two doors down from Fire Station No. 6.

One of the largest churches in Asheville, West Asheville Baptist celebrated its 50th anniversary in 1979. The first service was held on May 18, 1930 and the east wing was opened on Dec. 7, 1941. Dr. James H. Johnson has been its pastor since 1972.

Bruce Emory
Research

Fireman Missing In Church Blaze

Staff Photo by June Glenn Jr.

Search was under way this morning for fireman believed entombed in rubble of church.

Steeple Collapses

By DREW DOUGLAS
Staff Writer

Firefighters were still pouring water this afternoon into the smoking ruins of West Asheville Baptist Church where they think a fireman may remain entombed following the collapse of the church steeple during a raging fire Wednesday night.

Asheville Fire Department officials have declined to name the missing firemen, pending notification of his family.

The man was discovered missing after five firefighters ran for their lives when the steeple started to crash down on them as they battled the blaze inside the stately, brick church at 926 Haywood Road.

Related Story on Page 1, Section 2.

"You always hope for the best," an exhausted Fire Chief Powell W. Ball said in reference to the missing fireman.

Ball said that about 10:30 p.m. Wednesday, a team of firefighters was taking in two hoses to fight a blaze near the rear of the church's first floor near a balcony.

"They had gone in to bring in lines. They could see the fire burning under the steeple. They saw it was about ready to collapse and they started to run."

He said the firefighters split into two groups, with three heading for a nearby window exit and two others running through a door on the east side.

Only two of the men made it through the window before the steeple crashed down in what two witnesses said was an explosion of flames, sparks, smoke and ash.

"It was really scary," said 15-year-old Michelle Kidd, who lives directly across Haywood Road from the church. "There was fire and ashes flying all over." She and sister Dianna, 14, said the steeple appeared to crash direcly downward.

Today, firemen used a large crane-like snorkle truck to pour a steady stream of water into a smouldering fire in the church basement.

The center section of the 1,600-member church was a mass of tumbled brick and fire-razed rubble. Only the steel rafters of the section remained upright.

"We have a missing firemen," Ball said. "There's a strong possibility he's in the front section.

"There's still a fire in the basement and we can't go in because the floor will give way. We can't jeopardize any fireman's life now," Ball said

Harry Adams, Asheville safety officer, said rescuers had summoned a large construction crane from Morganton to remove the tons of rubble so the church could be searched more closely for the missing fireman, who is reportedly 25 years old and a one-year veteran of the department. The crane arrived just before press time.

Three other firefighters were slightly injured while fighting the blaze, which witnesses said began when lightning struck the steeple as a fierce thunderstorm moved through the area shortly after 9:30 p.m.

Fire Captain J. F. S. Whitworth identified the injured firemen as Capt. J. B. Woody, who was hospitalized, suffering from heat exhaustion and smoke inhalation; D. M. Miller, who was treated at the scene; and J. E. Padgett, who suffered an ankle injury.

Whitworth, who has been at the scene since firefighters first answered the alarm, said he felt it was fortunate that more men were not trapped when the steeple came crashing down.

Today, a crowd of spectators stood behind police lines as rescuers began removing by hand a pile of bricks in an area where they apparenly feel the firemen may be trapped.

While some firefighters clung to hope that the trapped man may be found alive, others — who asked not to

—Turn To Page Three

Fireman Missing In Blaze

From Page One

be named — said they feared there was little hope for his survival.

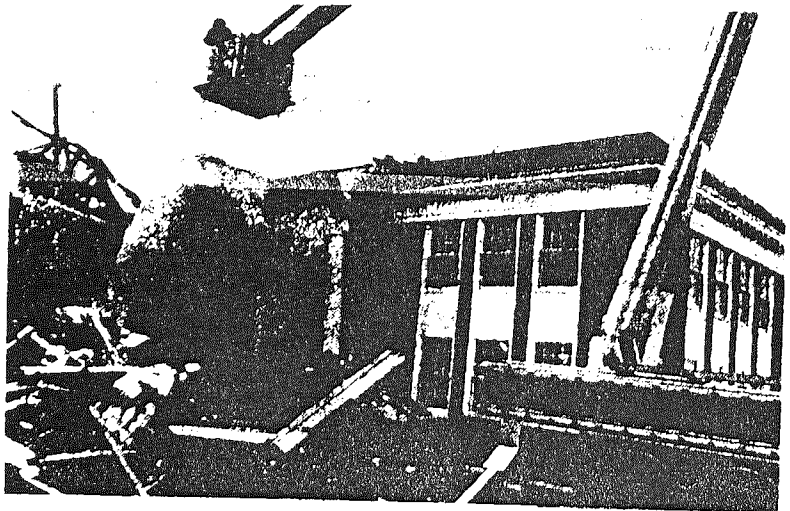
The steeple collapsed in the church auditorium in the structure's main section shortly after 10:30 p.m. Flames engulfed the center of the building.

Firefighters remained at the scene throughout the night, working to save the side schoolroom portions of the church.

Those sections and a chapel in the rear were protected by firewalls, officials said.

Ball said the last firefighter to die in a blaze was in 1963 when a floor collapsed at the Susquehanna Antiques on Biltmore Avenue.

Bruce Emory Research



— Staff Photo By June Glenn Jr.

Fireman Shoots Water On Remains Of West Asheville Church

Firefighter's Body Found Among Rubble At Church

By BARBARA BLAKE
Staff Writer

The body of a 25-year-old Asheville firefighter who had been missing and presumed dead since the steeple of the West Asheville Baptist Church crashed through the roof into the sanctuary in a massive fire Wednesday night was recovered about 4 p.m. Thursday by rescue workers who had been searching since early Thursday morning.

The body of Raymond Joseph Flowers, a one-year veteran of the department, was found beneath massive debris inside the church at approximately 3:30 p.m. Thursday after an intensive search which began after the fire was extinguished early Thursday morning.

Flowers' body, which apparently was crushed by the church's steeple, was taken to the state medical examiner's office in Chapel Hill for an autopsy. A report is expected early next week.

The fire was reported at 10:16 p.m. Wednesday during a massive rain and thunderstorm after witnesses reported seeing lightning hit the church's steeple. According to City Manager Kenneth M. Michalove, who released an unofficial statement Thursday, firefighters from the Asheville Fire Department arrived on the scene moments after the fire was reported and six firefighters entered the building at 10:30 p.m.

After determining the extent of the fire and that no one was inside, they began to move out a 11 p.m., when the roof structure in the sanctuary suddenly began to collapse. Five of the six firefighters escaped, but one, Flowers, could not be accounted for.

The church's pastor, the Rev. James Johnson, said that while the sanctuary of the church was destroyed, the other five buildings connected to the church were repairable and that some of them could be occupied within two weeks.

"As far as rebuilding, that is a long story," he

— Turn To Page 3

Firefighter

— Continued From Page One

said. "We will build back, there's no doubt about that. And parts of the church were spared. The chapel and new education building and the east and west wings were left pretty much intact." Also spared was the day care center, where 42 children are cared for. He said it would probably reopen within one to two weeks.

Johnson said following a meeting of church deacons Thursday night that the church had accepted an offer to use the Seventh-day Adventist church for services on Sunday, but that he was unsure what would happen beyond Sunday.

"We hope to relocate our offices to what we call the Dowell Building, an old dwelling house," Johnson said following the deacon's meeting. "Our offices will hopefully be transferred tomorrow. If we can get access to some of our buildings, we hope to take some of the furnishings out and dry them and store them in a warehouse. We hope within a week or two we can get in the chapel, then the small educational building within two months."

Asked if there were any particularly important possessions lost in the fire, Johnson said, "It will be mostly the memories. Of course, we had a beautiful baby grand piano, and we had just put in the best kind of sound equipment just a year ago. But the memories will haunt us for a long time, or the lack of them." The church was organized in 1929 and the sanctuary was completed in 1948.

Johnson said the deacons voted to commend the fire department for "a job well done," and expressed sympathy to "the one who's life was snuffed out (Flowers). This is our official position, and we decided to write a letter of commendation to the fire department to be published in the newspaper."

The fire involved hundreds of firefighters, some of whom remained on the scene throughout the day Thursday.

Fire Capt. James Whitworth, who arrived within minutes of the call, said the fire was unusual in that it burned so fiercely and quickly, causing the steeple to crash through the roof within minutes of the firefighters' arrival.

"It's regretful that he (Flowers) did die," Whitworth said. "There's no building anywhere I can think of that's worth a man's life. But it's our job and responsibility to protect lives and property. It's regretful that he lost his life, but he lost it in the line of duty."

Bruce Emory Research

West Asheville To Get Clinic For Emergencies

SAT JUL 10 1982

SAT JUL 10 1982

By SONDRA J. HARRIS
Staff Writer

An emergency medical clinic will open in West Asheville by October or November after an empty auto parts building on Leicester Highway is renovated, a Skyland physicians group said Friday.

The old auto parts building is located across from the Ingles market at 7 Leicester Highway.

Buncombe County has two emergency rooms, one at Memorial Mission Hospital and a second at Western Carolina Emergency Medicine PA in Skyland.

The third clinic will take care of minor emergencies in West Asheville, according to Dr. Thomas Shreeve of the Skyland clinic. Heart attack victims and other trauma patients will still be taken to Mission's emergency room.

A West Asheville clinic has been considered since the Skyland clinic opened 2½ years ago.

At that time, the group of physicians that opened the Skyland clinic considered opting for a clinic in West Asheville instead. Both communities needed nearby emergency rooms, Shreeve said. "We are proceeding frustratingly slow," he said Friday. "We are about ready to sign a lease. The documents are being drawn up. It's just a matter of signing a document."

The lease "should be signed in the next week or so," he said. Shreeve said the West Asheville clinic, with 4,000 square feet, will be slightly smaller than the Skyland clinic. The clinic will include an X-ray laboratory and other emergency equipment. It will have six or seven examining rooms, Shreeve said.

The Skyland group of doctors will sublet the building from Mission, which will lease the building, Shreeve said. The doctors's group will hire two additional physicians, two nurses, X-ray lab technicians and administrative personnel, he said. Six people will work in the clinic at one time. The clinic will be open from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. seven days a week.

The Skyland doctors' group is interviewing physicians for the West Asheville facility, Shreeves said. Shreeve said the hospital will use part of the clinic, but said he was not sure what it would be used for. Robert F. Burgin, executive director of Memorial Mission, could not be reached Friday night.

Shreeve said the clinic "will operate in much the same capacity" as the Skyland clinic. The Skyland facility serves more than 60 patients per day and has treated 41,000 patients since it opened. The clinic opened as an alternative to Mission's emergency room to take some of the non-critical load off the emergency room.

Most of the physicians at Skyland take turns staffing Mission's emergency room to provide the hospital with around-the-clock medical help. The physicians at the West Asheville clinic will also staff the hospital's emergency room. The Skyland group of physicians includes Shreeve, Dr. Thomas Howald, Dr. Thomas Berner, Dr. D. Gary Whitaker, Dr. Luisa Lorenzo, Dr. Craig Miner and Dr. Ronald Plemmons.

Asheville Citizen July 10, 1982

Sellers Murdered; Man Charged

AT 8-5-82

By MERRELL GREGORY
Staff Writer

Asheville police recovered the body of missing car salesman Terry "Ted" Sellers of Asheville early this morning and have charged a youth visiting in Haywood County with murder in Sellers' death.

The suspect, Frank E. Corley, 19, appeared in Buncombe County District Court before Judge Peter Roda this morning to be told his rights and warned that he faces a possible death sentence in the first-degree murder charge. He is also charged with kidnapping and auto larceny. He is being held without bond until his first hearing, which has tentatively been set for Aug. 26.

Corley, a thin young man with curly long hair and a skimpy mustache, sat without showing emotion during the hearing. He leaned back and rocked in his chair, then rested his head on his hand as Roda completed the hearing.

Sellers had been missing since Tuesday afternoon, when he took a man out to test drive an orange Corvette and never came back.

According to Police Lt. Wil Annarino, the missing car was found about noon Wednesday by a farmer tending his hay field in the remote Cruso section of Haywood County. The farmer saw blood splattered on the seat and windows of the car and notified the Haywood County Sheriff's Department, which in turn notified Asheville police.

After talking to residents of the area, police began looking for Corley and questioning another suspect. Police told Corley's brother Charles that they wanted to talk to Corley, and Corley came voluntarily to the Haywood County Sheriff's Department around 5 p.m. and was there all night being questioned.

At 3:30 a.m. today, Annarino said, Corley took a group of law enforcement officers to an isolated section of Pisgah National Forest near Candler and showed them Seller's body. It was half buried under a pile of leaves and branches.

Annarino said there was one gunshot wound to the head and that it was impossible to tell if there were other injuries. He said it appeared that Sellers had been killed between 4:30 and 5:30 p.m. Tuesday, probably as the two drove to the car's hiding place. The body has been sent to Raleigh for autopsy by the state medical examiner. A report on time, cause of death and type of weapon used is expected this afternoon.

Police charged Corley with murder, kidnapping and auto larceny at 4:30 a.m. today. No charges were filed against the other suspect, but Annarino said charges could still be filed against that person and others.

Annarino said that Corley had been visiting his brother in Haywood County.

Corley's mother and sister Paula, who are also visiting the brother from Florida, were in court this morning. His sister told Roda that the family would hire its own lawyer. She said following the first appearance that no attorney had been selected. Corley's mother refused to talk about her son, saying information "will come out soon enough." Annarino said the family lives in Sebring, Fla.

Car theft was apparently the sole motive in the killing. Annarino said it appears that Sellers was murdered as the two drove to the field where the Corvette was hidden. He said the suspect told him he had planned to hide the car there and drive it back to Florida later.

Sellers was apparently the third car salesman in Asheville who had been approached in an effort to steal a Corvette.

Police knew Wednesday of an attempt made Monday to steal a car from Robinson Brothers Motors. Annarino said today that another attempt has been reported, this one from Toyota of Asheville. They said a young man had come in to try to test drive a car on Monday afternoon. Toyota had been alerted about the first incident at Robinson Brother's motors, and had refused to take him on the ride.

The other car salesman who had been approached Monday talked about his experience today with relief for himself and sorrow for Sellers and his family.

Michael Ray West of Robinson Brothers said he felt all along that something was suspicious about the man he took out Monday to drive the black Corvette.

"He was real nervous. He smoked two cigarettes before we got to the first stop sign. I thought all along something was happening; I had the funniest feeling behind my neck — I got real cold."

When the two stopped at Asheland Avenue and McDowell Street, West told the young driver to turn right to go back to the car lot.

"He said 'No, I'm a professional car thief,' and he told me what he was going to do.

"I said 'ain't nobody going to steal my car' and I hauled off and hit him across the chopper, grabbed the key and kicked him out on the sidewalk."

The man fled. West pursued him in the car, but lost him, then raced back to Robinson's and called the police.

"I'm glad today I reacted the way I did," he said. "It could have been me."

West said that the man had been brought to Robinson's by a young man and woman driving a 1972 Mercury Cougar. The man had told him he was a cash buyer and that his mother in Florida could be contacted for information about his insurance.

Both West and city police said nothing like this had ever before happened in Asheville.

Asheville Times August 5, 1982

SUNDAY - August 15, 1982

Devastating Church Fire Did Bestow Some Blessings

The old song advises us to "look for the silver lining," and in most instances, in most situations, there is one.

Sometimes when things look darkest, you can see a bit of a silvery glow.

Just ask Dr. James H. Johnson, pastor of West Asheville Baptist Church.

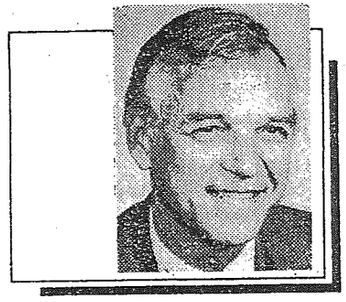
During a thunderstorm last May 26, lightning struck the church, set it afire, and the sanctuary burned to the ground.

When a home burns, a family is uprooted; when a church burns, the whole community is affected.

Dealing with this situation hasn't been easy, but every member of the church can see the silver lining.

"There have been some blessings, yes," Dr. Johnson said. "It has taken everything to keep body and soul together during this time of frustration and recovery — but there have been some blessings.

"Giving has been more," he said. "Our members are more generous;



Bob Terrell

they know we will have to be in order to rebuild. Our worship crowd has been strong and positive, and church attendance has increased on Sunday night.

"The attitude of the congregation has been tremendous."

There are other positive signs of rejuvenation. The church has called an associate pastor, William Carpenter of Hendersonville, who will arrive this week. He holds two recent degrees from Southwestern Baptist Seminary.

Slowly, surely, the West Asheville Baptist Church will rise again from the ashes of its sanctuary.

"We hate to preserve an eyesore," said Coy Mehaffey, chairman of the church's publicity committee and a member of the steering committee charged with making plans and rebuilding the church, "but we can't clear away the debris of the sanctuary until we reach a settlement with the insurance company."

The committee hopes that settlement is imminent.

Whatever it is, however, won't cover rebuilding the sanctuary. Because of recent inflation and the changes in the nation's economy, the amount of insurance carried by the church was not enough to rebuild the sanctuary as it was before the fire.

There are actually two insurance claims pending. The first was created by the fire itself. The second stemmed from removing the steel girders, which remained standing after the fire. When the girders were removed, the rear wall of the sanctuary, which was also standing after the fire, fell onto the education building and did $58,000 damage.

"That created a lot more agony and frustration," Dr. Johnson said. "We had to move the church library and the choir suite."

Since then, they've been careful what they touched.

"To rebuild, we're going to have to dig deeply," said Dr. Johnson. "And we are proud of the help we're getting from our friends."

A number of other churches, some of other denominations, have sent cash gifts to West Asheville Baptist to apply to its rebuilding fund. Individuals, some of whom have no affiliation with the church, have sent checks.

The same interest has been noted on three workdays set up by the church on which the membership did what it could to clean up and straighten things out from the fire.

"Attendance increased progressively on those three days," Dr. Johnson said. "We had about 50 people on the first workday. The number jumped to 100 on the second, and on to 150 on the third.

"Several who came to help us with the work were not even members of the church," he said, "and some of those have since joined the church."

The congregation meets on Sunday morning for Sunday School and worship in the Mount Pisgah Seventh-day Adventist building. On Sunday nights, when attendance is considerably smaller, the meetings are held in the chapel of West Asheville Baptist, which did not burn.

"My first sermon after the fire," said Dr. Johnson, "was entitled 'Beauty from Ashes.' I didn't even know it was in the Bible, but the Lord gave it to me."

He stressed several positive points that he thought could arise from the ashes, among them more church unity, teamwork on work days, sacrificial giving ("We've seen a lot of that," he said), and a new edifice more compatible in terms of energy efficiency and things like that.

The church's congregation is rather large with about 1,600 names on the church rolls, 1,350 of whom are considered to be in resident membership.

The entire congregation viewed the loss of a fireman's life in the fire as the real tragedy. Raymond Joseph Flowers was killed fighting the fire.

"We can rebuild the church," said Dr. Johnson, "but no one can replace that fireman's life."

The question asked by most people, including the congregation, is when will the church get into a new sanctuary.

"That's almost an impossible question to answer," said Dr. Johnson, "but we're hopeful that we will arrive at that joyous occasion around Christmas of 1983."

Out Of Ashes...Beauty

"Out of ashes will come much beauty was the theme of a sermon last May by the Rev. James Johnson, pastor of West Asheville Baptist Church.

The words had extra meaning for the church. Fire had just destroyed its sanctuary, taking the life of one fireman.

Church members last week formally approved plans for a new $1.6 million facility — they hope to break ground in about a month.

"Our people are anxious to get started," said Coy R. Mehaffey, publicity chairman for the project.

The new church will be built exactly where the old was located, between the remaining east and west buildings. The sanctuary will be fan-shaped rather than rectangular to minimize the distance between the pulpit and the people.

While the old church was inset somewhat, the new facility will be flush with the other two buildings and will feature a spacious vestibule — with chandelier and men's and women's lounges.

"We're about 20 percent larger," said Mehaffey, explaining that the auditorium will seat 800 downstairs and 216 in the balcony, compared to 700 downstairs and 75 in the balcony of the old church. The new facility will have an expanded choir loft to seat 100 persons.

The new fellowship hall on the bottom floor will seat 400 people for dining and fellowship and will feature expanded kitchen facilities. Included are Sunday School facilities for 500 adults.

A special feature in the bottom level will be a prayer room where people can be by themselves to meditate and pray.

Mehaffey is excited about the future of the church with its new facility. Currenty about 500 persons attend church each Sunday, and the new facility should meet the church's expected growth for many years, he said.

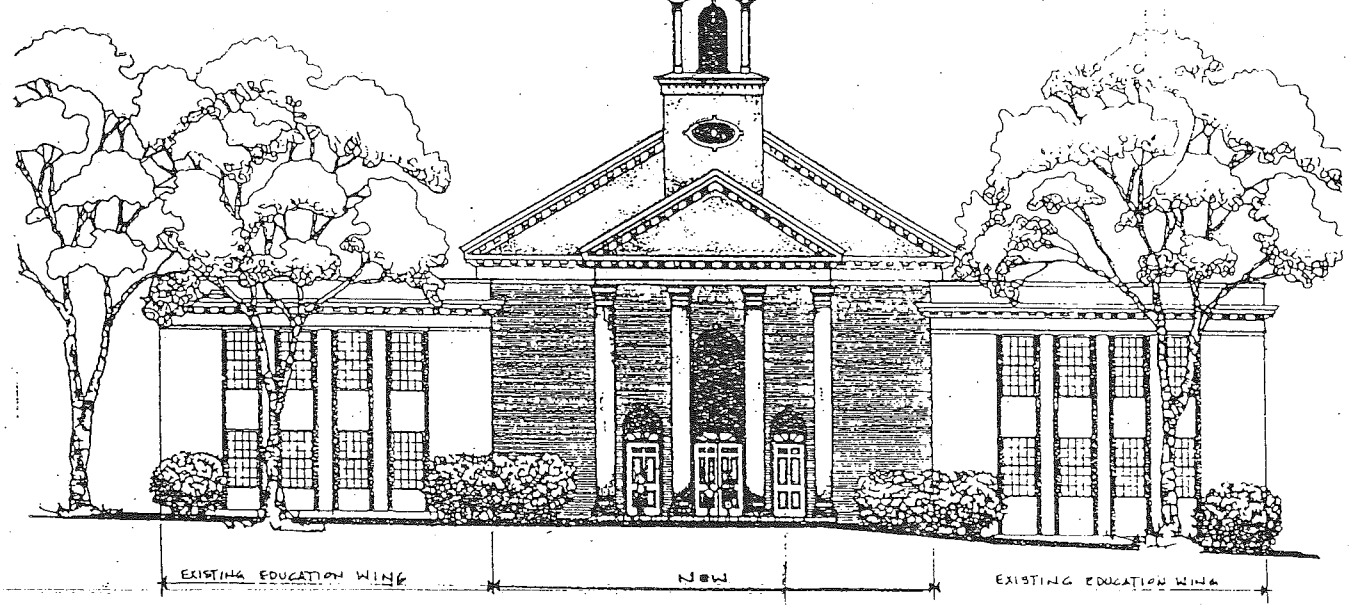
Funds for the project will come primarily from insurance on the old facility. About $1.3 million was received from insurance, and church members have about $150,000 in cash and pledges available for the building fund. They project the additional commitment to build the church at about $132,000.

The church had good insurance, said Mehaffey. "We can rebuild a building. The tragedy of the thing is that a man lost his life."

The response of the public, particularly other churches, has been particularly heartening, he said. "The Seventh Day Adventists are great," he said, noting that the church opened its doors to the Baptists to hold services until they could return to their church in December.

Area churches donated over $12,000 without being asked, he said. As for the church's own members, said Mehaffey, "The experience has brought the family of the church closer together. It has strengthened our ties to help one another."

— Tim Reid



Architect's L.B. Evans' Sketch Of West Asheville Baptist Church. Construction Will Take 12-14 Months

Wedding Is Comic Caper

By PATTY WALDRUP
Staff Writer

Marital bliss was entered into lightly last Thursday as members of Calvary Baptist Church on Haywood Road participated in a "mock" wedding sponsored by senior citizens of LLL (Live Longer And Like It) Club.

The comic wedding, in which traditional male/female roles were reversed, was performed "just for pure entertainment," said Blanche Kirby, director of the event.

She first directed the farce some 33 years ago for a Sunday school class at the church and the Dorchester Garden Club of West Asheville.

The cast of 12 had some real standouts this year.

Sherri Carreker, wife of the church's pastor, was the minister who looked more like Charlie Chaplin.

Luke Atkinson, of Luke Atkinson's Furniture, was the towering, blushing bride. And Carolyn Lang was the somewhat petite, but anxious, bridegroom.

Instructing the unsightly duo to join right hands and cross their fingers, Carreker asked the bride's father, "Do you give her to the board and keep of this unfortunate man?"

The bridegroom was instructed to place the brass ring,

— See Page Seven

THE BIG MOMENT — Weeks of preparation culminate in mock wedding ceremony (top photo) as blushing bride Luke Atkinson listens to wedding vows recited from a home improvement catalog by Sherri Carreker, right. At left is re- doubtable ring bearer Don Welborne Botto photo shows the entire wedding party assembl for unique service in the fellowship hall of Ca vary Baptist Church on Haywood Road. (Sta photos by Ewart Ball)

WEDDING SCENES — Unlikely trio at mock wedding, above, are (L-R) Carolyn Lang, Mrs. Horace Smith and Mr. Smith. At right, blushing bride Luke Atkinson is flanked by bridegroom Carolyn Lang. (Staff photos by Ewart Ball)

NUPTIAL MERRIMENT — Obviously enjoying mock wedding (left photo) are (L-R) bridesmaid John Bennett, minister Sherri Carreker and best man Alverta Bolick. Shown during ceremony (right photo) are (L-R) Carreker, Bennett, Estelle Cole (bride's father) and Mrs. Horace Smith (bridgroom's father). Blanche Kirby directed the wedding.

Wedding Bliss Entered Into Lightly

— Continued From Page Six

which he plucked from an oversized pillow held by the ring bearer, on the bride's thumb.

John Bennett, a retired postal service employee, was the rosy cheeked, pink frocked bridesmaid.

Alverta Bolick, owner of Allison's Flower Shop, was best man, and Carter Parham was the petal-tossing flower girl.

Don Welborne, music director at the church, was the awesome-looking ring bearer in short pants.

The entourage of parents included: Mrs. Horace Smith as the bridegroom's father, Horace Smith as the mother of the bridegroom, Estelle Cole as the bride's father and Mattie Lewis as the mother of the bride.

A wailing Louise Buckner portrayed the rejected suitor.

Atkinson, a businessman in the community for the last 29 years and a member of Calvary Baptist Church for 35 years, said of the production, "I really enjoyed it. I think everybody enjoyed it.

The campaign to save Richmond Hill officially begins next Tuesday.

Richmond Hill Campaign Set

By ZACK ALLEN
Staff Writer

Richmond Hill has some friends. You will be hearing from them next Tuesday when they open a campaign to save the Asheville landmark.

Richmond Hill is the 8,000-square-foot Victorian mansion that sits in boarded-up and paint-peeling splendor atop the bluffs that line the western banks of the French Broad River near Asheville. The historic house is facing a March 1, 1984, deadline for demolition or removal.

The friends of Richmond Hill, led by the Preservation Society of Asheville and Buncombe County, are gambling that they can raise the more than $50,000 it will take to move the 94-year-old structure and set it on new foundations on 6½ acres of land the society has purchased a few hundred yards to the east.

If the friends lose their gamble, the 30-room home built by Richmond Pearson in 1889-1890 will end up at the business end of a wrecking ball.

The house is of no use to its present owners, North Carolina Baptist Homes, Inc. The group has built a group facility home for the aging on the 21-acre tract it purchased in 1974 from heirs of the original owner and it expects to have future needs for the land.

The Preservation Society entered the pictured after a demolition permit was sought for the home in 1978. After hearing protests, the Baptists agreed to allow the society to attempt to find a buyer or to raise the money to move the home itself. March 1, 1984, is the deadline and the society is ready to launch its "Last-Ditch" effort to save the structure.

The house sits on part of a 600-acre tract of land acquired just after the Civil War by Richmond Mumford Pearson, who served as chief justice of the North Carolina Supreme Court for many years. R.M. Pearson had loaned money to the Town of Woodfin and received the land as repayment.

The land went to a son, Richmond Pearson, when R.M. Pearson died in in 1878. It was Richmond Pearson who built the mansion and gave the estate its name — Richmond Hill.

Richmond Pearson served in Congress for three terms, representing Asheville and Western North Carolina, and was appointed by President Theodore Roosevelt to serve as minister to Persia, Greece and Montenegro. He remained in the U.S. foreign service until he returned to Richmond Hill to spent his last years. He died in 1923.

Pearson's son and daughter, Thomas and Marjorie, inherited the estate. Thomas Pearson also spent much of his lifetime in foreign service, much of it abroad. He was an authority on economics, culture and social customs and was also a banker, teacher and editor. He retired to Richmond Hill in 1951.

Over the next two years Pearson and his sister reopened parts of the mansion that had been closed for 25 years and, in 1953, established a public museum display the antiques, rare books, paintings and other possessions collected by the generations of Pearsons.

Thomas Pearson died in 1963 and the museum was closed. Marjorie Pearson died in 1972. Heirs auctioned off the contents of the home in 1973 and sold it and the remaining land to the Baptist group in 1974.

With time running out for Richmond Hill and, with no potential buyer in sight, the Preservation Society is taking action. At 11 a.m. next Tuesday, at Richmond Hill, the society will launch its campaign to save the mansion.

On hand will be officials, representatives of the community and other friends of Richmond Hill. They will start the clock on a four-month countdown that they hope will raise the money to save a part of the city's history. They know that they have to move it — or lose it.

Asheville Citizen November 1983

Thursday/Friday, Dec. 15/16, 1983

Pearson Threw City's Biggest July 4 Party

By B.R. SMITH
Staff Writer

The year was 1890 — July 4th — and the occasion, other than the observance of Independence Day, was probably the largest party ever given in Buncombe County.

The host was Richmond Pearson, diplomat, congressman and the proud owner of one of Asheville's most prestigious homes overlooking the French Broad River from atop Bingham Heights.

To this party Pearson had invited 1,000 men — not to enjoy watermelon, ice cream and a fireworks display — things usually associated with the observance of the Glorious Fourth, but to work for one hour each for one dollar!

On that day, Pearson and his 1,000 workers built one mile of road 16 feet wide in one hour. The men received their dollar wages for an hour's work on Lake Shore Avenue, one of the streets of a proposed real estate development near the Pearson home.

The development was never completed, but the enormous task of building a road in an hour was noted in the annals of Buncombe County.

Richmond Hill, as the site of the Pearson residence was known, was an Asheville showplace for several decades. It has fallen into disrepair in recent years, but efforts are under way by the Preservation Society of Asheville and Buncombe County to save the structure and restore the once-elegant home to its former grandeur.

Built to accommodate many guests and large parties, the house was one of the first in the area to have running water. This was accomplished by gravity-feeding the water into the house from the highest point on the estate. The home was originally lighted by gas and heated by 10 master fireplaces. It had one of the first household communication systems.

A true estate in the beginning, Richmond Hill had vineyards, orchards, dairy and pasture lands, greenhouses, gardens, an ice house, and was almost self-supporting.

It was linked to Asheville by a road built by Richmond Pearson, who bridged the French Broad River crossing. His bridge was destroyed by the 1916 flood and replaced by the county. The span is still named Pearson Bridge. It was once a popular pastime of Ashevilleans to make the approximately four-mile drive from Asheville to Richmond Hill along the scenic Pearson road, now known as Pearson Drive.

The original 600-acre tract was acquired in 1867 by Richmond Mumford Pearson, who was Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of North Carolina for many years.

Upon the justice's death in 1878, the land was bequeathed to his son, Richmond Pearson, who gave the estate its name and built the four-story, 30-room mansion in the 1880s. In 1925 the estate was inherited by Richmond Pearson's son and daughter, Thomas and Marjorie Pearson.

Richmond Pearson served three terms in Congress, representing the Asheville and Western North Carolina region. He was appointed by Theodore Roosevelt as United States Minister to Persia, Greece and Montenegro. Following years of foreign service, he returned to Richmond Hill and spent his last years there. He died in 1923.

Thomas Pearson, like his father, spent his lifetime in public service, much of it abroad. In 1951, at the close of his last foreign assignment, he also came home to Richmond Hill.

For several years prior to his death in 1963, Thomas Pearson and his sister, Marjorie, kept the house open to the public as a museum. Many visitors to the house were personally conducted through the public rooms by Thomas Pearson and observed the many pieces of art, antiques, rare books and other possessions collected by three generations of Pearsons.

Marjorie Pearson's death in 1972 at the age of 82 led to the dismantling of the estate and the auctioning of many of the Pearson belongings.

'Gutta Percha' Golf Played Here In 1890s

By RICHARD MORRIS
Citizen-Times Correspondent

With more than 60 championship golf courses scattered throughout the 17 western most counties of North Carolina, the area is one of the foremost golf meccas east of the Mississippi River.

The popularity of the courses, most of which are hill and dale affairs marked throughout by scenic spendor and by meandering streams and lakes, is underscored by the fact that hundreds of thousands of rounds are played on the links in WNC every summer.

Golf's greatest growth has come since 1950 when there were less than two dozen courses in the mountains, but men and women have been playing golf in the Asheville area since the early part of the 1890s.

In the 1890s a few colorfully dressed men and women were seen striking miniature objects with thin mallets around a pasture or open field in awkward fashion.

Early in 1894, however, golfers of both sexes played the game on the spacious grounds surrounding Mountain Park Hotel in Hot Springs. Located in Madison County, Hot Springs made the most of its mineral springs and became regarded as one of the top health resorts in the nation.

About that time a Scot named McNorton brought the game to Asheville. He was seen practicing in vacant lots in West Asheville. Later that year Dr. Thomas Cheeseborough, who had taken up the game while studying medicine in Edinburgh, Scotland, and Joseph L. McCloskey joined McNorton in the action. Cheeseborough, a native of Asheville, while studying abroad, had made the 35-mile trip from Edinburgh to St. Andrews, "the cradle of golf" on occasions to play at the "old course" of the Royal and Ancient Golf Club.

The first club in the mountains was the Wana Luna Golf Club at Hot Springs. In February of 1895 a trio of Easterners — James Converse, of Boston; Dr. C. L. Lindley, New York City; and Homer Ramsdell, of Newburgh, N. Y. — opened a 9-hole golf course at Mountain Park Hotel. The course covered three miles and attracted a number of golfers.

The first golf club in Asheville, the Asheville Country Club, was an outgrowth of the old Swannanoa Hunt Club, organized in 1893. Dr. Cheeseborough was one of the first masters of the hunt club and McCloskey was secretary and manager of that club, which had its headquarters at O'Henry House on Old Battery Park Hill.

On Jan. 28, 1895 that club was incorporated as the Swannanoa Country Club with its membership made up of Asheville's top society. The club house was built about five miles west of Asheville near the old Houghteling Place and Strawberry Hill in what is now known as the Malvern Hills area.

McCloskey and Cheeseborough arranged a few crude holes there and many residents joined the club and began playing the sport. McCloskey later expanded the course to 9 holes.

The formal opening of the club came on June 7, 1895 when people traveled in carriages and carts to Sulphur Springs, which crossed French Broad River over Carrier's Bridge at its junction with the Swannanoa River. It was on that day that McCloskey, Cheeseborough, Col. Martin and a man known as Winans played a match. All wore the correct golf costume, which consisted of a flannel cap, shirt, knickerbockers (knickers) and long grey stockings. Each had his sleeves rolled to exactly 1-inch above his elbows. At that time it was believed that no one could play at his best unless dressed in that fashion.

The foursome used the basic clubs of the day — wooden driver, brassy, cleek, mashie and putter and the ball was the "gutta percha" ball which was swept away instead of being hit in today's fashion.

It was in that year that the U. S. Golf Association was organized and that was the first year of the men and women's National Amateur Championships.

It was soon discovered that the Swannanoa Hunt Club layout wasn't suitable and the course was too far from the city. The club was then moved to two miles north of town near the Woolsey Sanitorium. Street car service ran near the pastureland site which was sub-leased from some butchers who had leased the land for slaughter pens. The site was at what is now 412 Merrimon Ave., and in 1897 a 7-hole course was built. It was soon expanded to a 9-hole course.

In 1898 it was decided that this was not good enough and on Dec. 24 George Willis Pack came to the rescue of the struggling club by giving it a five-year lease on 100 acres of land for the purpose of building a first class course and attractive clubhouse near The Manor. McCloskey, the club secretary, laid out a 9-hole golf course and the new Swannanoa Country Club and Golf Links opened in February of 1899, partly on the property of Grove Park and partly on Edgemont Park at the terminus of the Charlotte Street car line.

It was at this site that the second annual Southern Amateur Championship was played in 1903.

In 1909 the organization changed its name to the Asheville Country Club and enough land was purchased for an 18-hole course, the first such course in WNC. Many years later the club's name was changed to the Country Club of Asheville. In 1913 world renowned golf course architect Donald G. Ross remodeled the course.

From those humble beginnings, golf has flourished in Asheville and throughout the mountain region, and many great courses have been built here: Biltmore Forest Country Club in 1922, Beaver Lake Golf Course in 1924, and Asheville Municipal in 1927. The latter was opened the same day that Charles Lindburgh flew the Spirit of St. Louis non-stop to Paris.

Professional golf came here in 1917 with a PGA tournament that continued until 1923. The PGA returned from 1939 to 1942, and the Ladies PGA played a tournament here for a few years in the 1950s. In the '60s the Sky View Open for black players began at Municipal course and continues today.

Many of golf's all-time greats played here in those tournaments: Walter Hagan, Gene Sarazen, Ben Hogan, Sam Snead, and Byron Nelson; and other notables, like Arnold Palmer, Jack Nicklaus, Gary Player, and Cary Middlecoff have played exhibitions here.

Over the years Asheville has had its share of outstanding amateur golfers with Alan Smith, Henry Westall, Harry Ehle, Al Dowtin and J. C. Hyatt heading the pack. One of the most skilled of all the golfers produced in Asheville and all WNC was Brooks Dendy, winner of the Black National Championship in 1932, 1936 and 1939.

Blacks Prominent In City's History

A. C-T 12/15/83 Centennial

By HENRY ROBINSON
Staff Writer

Shortly after the abolition of slavery in the South, blacks began the push for equality in the workplace and in politics.

In some areas of the South, whites were heavily outnumbered by blacks, which led to the election of hundreds of ex-slaves to top positions in city, county and state governments.

In Asheville, Newton Shepherd, a street sweeper, became the first black to hold public office when he was elected to the board of aldermen in 1880. Shepherd served on the board with F. M. Miller, John H. Williams, Thomas W. Patton and H.C. Hunt when the city received its charter.

* * *

Isaac Dickson, who was born into slavery in 1831, became one of the leading businessmen, civic and church leaders in the city.

Born in Shelby, Dickson was given his freedom in 1852. He moved to Burke County, where he and Delia Reed were married. He worked on a construction crew building a railroad line between Morganton and Asheville. And in 1855, the Dicksons moved to Asheville and began working for a white family in the Ravencroft area.

Dickson worked as a general houseman and his wife served as the family cook. Five of the Dickson children were born at the place of their employment. Five additional children were born at 133 Valley St., where the family moved. The Dicksons saved their earnings and began buying land in the Valley and Velvet areas until they had acquired 20 lots.

Dickson constructed 20 houses in the area, which was known as "Dickson Town." Dickson converted the basement of his Valley Street home into a grocery and operated a wood and coal yard at the rear of the house.

He also established a "hack service," which provided transportation for both black and white travelers from the train depot to the travelers' destination.

A deeply religious man, Dickson was one of the founders of St. Matthias Episcopal Church on Dundee Street. He was also the first black man to serve on the Buncombe County Board of Education. He died in 1918 at the age of 87.

* * *

James Vester Miller, born in 1860 in Rutherfordton, was one of the leading builders in Asheville.

He moved to Asheville as a young boy with his mother, Louisa, who became a cook for Thomas Wolfe's family. Miller and his mother lived on South Beaumont Street. Miller would not attend school, choosing instead to spend most of his time carrying water for construction workers.

Shortly after he married Violet Agnes Jackson in 1881. Miller, who had little knowledge of reading and writing, was tutored by his wife. He was hired at a brickyard in Fletcher where he worked until he became an independent bricklayer. A few years later, he founded Miller Construction Co.

Miller and his wife lived on a dirt road near Beaumont Street which was later named Miller Street. He once owned a large portion of land in the Emma section of Buncombe County, where he built a 12 room house for his family and several houses for his employees.

Miller's company constructed St. Matthias Episcopal Church, Mount Zion Baptist Church, Hopkins Chapel AME Zion Church, the old Hill Street Baptist Church, the old Hill Street School, the Wilson Building, and several buildings in downtown Asheville. Miller died in 1940 at the age of 80. Miller's grandson, Quinton Miller, is principal of William Randolph Elementary School in Asheville.

* * *

B. J. Jackson, who operated a vegetable market from the 1880s until 1924, was one of the first black men to establish a business in the downtown area of Asheville.

Jackson's firm, which was noted for its fresh vegetables, provided products for hotels, boarding houses and cafes for more than 25 years. Jackson had 10 people working in the market along with several of his children. Born in Spartanburg, S. C., Jackson and his wife, Lula, were the parents of 10 children. Nine of the children attended college, including Mrs. Ruth Cannon, a retired Asheville educator, who lives on Madison Avenue.

CHURCH DRAMA — Calvary Baptist Church will give a second performance of the musical drama, " 'Til Millions Know," at 11 a.m. Sunday. The play (see photo) was previously presented at an evening service in May. Don Welborn, minister of music, and David Brookshire, drama director, will conduct this presentation on the events following the 40 days after the Resurrection of Christ.

Church Homecoming Celebrates 75 Years

Members of Calvary Baptist Church will celebrate 75 years of service to the area at the church's homecoming Sunday.

Mementos and memories abound this time of year for church members.

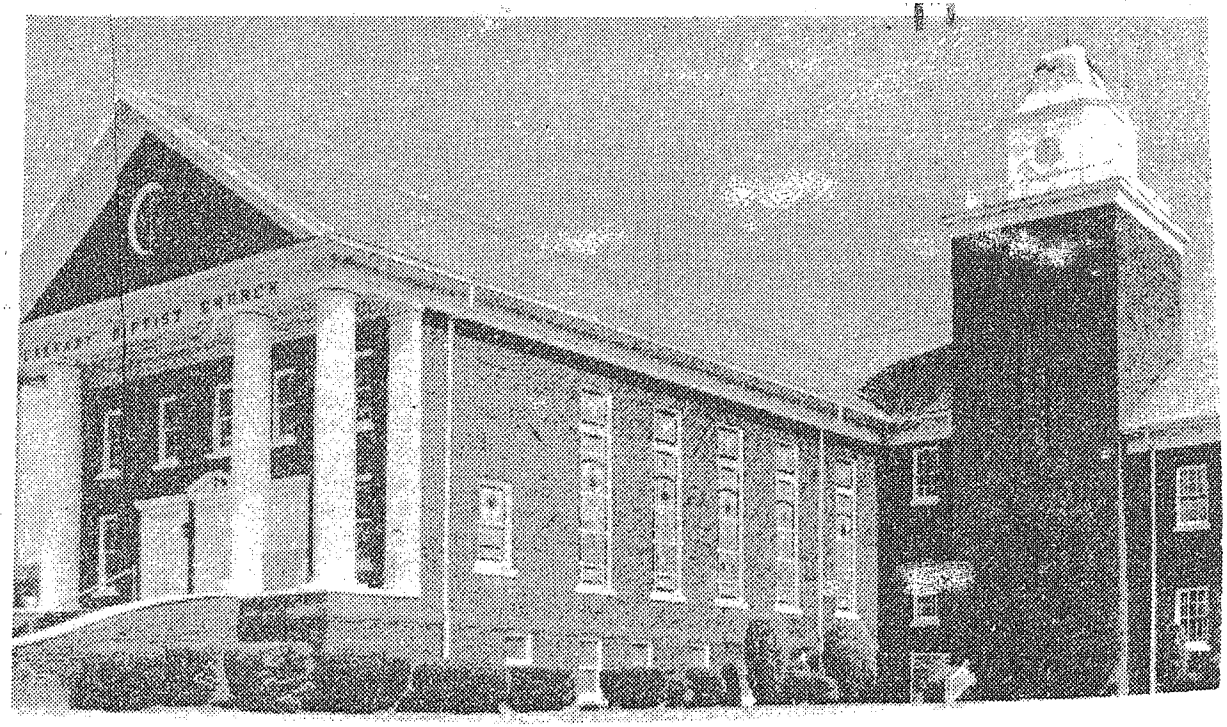
The first few pages in a church scrapbook are filled with faded brown newspaper clippings and sepia-colored photos.

One large photo shows the Odd Fellows Hall that used to be on the corner of Hanover Street and Haywood Road. Sunday School meetings were held there for more than two years before the church was officially organized Jan. 3, 1909. Sixty-eight charter members were counted.

A Baptist Young People's Organization was started one week later.

A Woman's Missionary Society

— See Page 11



Church Homecoming

— Continued From Page 10

was organized nearly a year before the church.

Another smaller photo shows the neat brick church built by the congregation soon after Calvary Baptist was organized. It was still incomplete when the first services were held there in July of 1909.

The first pastor to be ordained from Calvary Baptist was Fred F. Brown, in 1913.

For 14 years, that little building on the west side of Hanover Street was used by the growing church. Additions were built on, and church members went back to the Odd Fellows Hall for classes.

Construction began at the present site at 531 Haywood Road in 1921, and services were started there before the church was completed in 1925.

An iron pot, situated near the pulpit, was the depository for donations toward the building fund. The pot later was enclosed in the cornerstone.

John Lawrence and Myrtle Logan, a charter member, were married June 9, 1925, in the first wedding held in Calvary Baptist's sanctuary.

Since the original building was constructed, an education building was added in the mid-1950s. The Memorial Chapel was built in 1972.

The church held its 75th anniversary observation Jan. 8 of this year.

The homecoming celebration Sunday will begin with the worship service at 11 a.m., with the Rev. Steven Carreker preaching a sermon of challenge and presenting a historical dramatic monologue.

A communion service also will be held.

An afternoon reception will follow in the fellowship hall.

Calvary Baptist has achieved several "firsts" in its history.

Blanche Starnes, former minister of music, started the first graded program of music in the state. A representative of the North Carolina Baptist Convention will visit the church Nov. 11 to present Mrs. Starnes and the church with plaques in honor of this fact.

Calvary also started the first Brotherhood of Baptist Men in North Carolina, now the Baptist Men.

Allan Culberson is head of the Baptist Men.

Calvary was a charter member of Asheville Buncombe Community Christian Ministry, and the church's Womens' Missionary Union is very active in the ministry.

The church offers its more than 1,400 members a variety of programs.

Sunday School classes for all ages are taught at 9:45 a.m. each Sunday. Don Jones is Sunday School superintendent.

Sunday worship service is at 11 a.m. Church training is at 6 p.m. Sundays, followed by evening worship at 7 p.m.

Wednesday evening activities begin with a fellowship supper at 5:30 p.m. Family prayer meeting is held from 6:15 to 6:45 p.m. Choir rehearsal, youth and childrens' meetings, and teacher training are held after the family prayer meeting.

On Thursday nights, members work one-on-one in a literacy program, helping others with their reading skills.

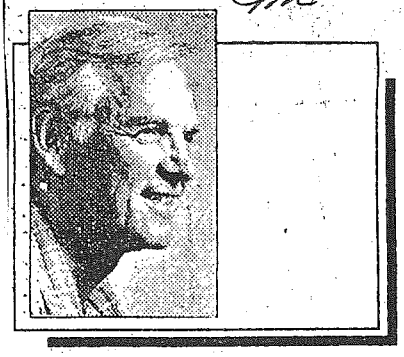
The Womens' Misisonary Union is headed by Kitty Hyde.

For older members, there is the Live Longer and Like It Club. The club meets monthly for fellowship, lunch and a program.

Paula Settle is Calvary's minister of education.

The church has 36 active deacons.

Revival services will be held at Calvary in October. After the revival, Carreker and Don Welborn, minister of music, will travel to Germany and England to preach at the European Baptist Convention.



Bob Terrell

Church Nears End Of Long, Hard Ordeal

The people who attend West Asheville Baptist Church are writing a quick end to a nagging problem.

For 2½ years they have struggled with the problem of having no church sanctuary since it was destroyed by fire on the night of May 26, 1982.

On the morning after the fire, many of the church's members went by the charred, smoking remains of their church and shook their heads in dismay.

But they were determined that a new, larger and more beautiful church would rise from the ashes, and in this case determination won the day.

They had good insurance on the old structure, which would help to replace it. But insurance is seldom enough to cover the costs of rebuilding in these days of rising prices.

Still, rallying behind the pastor, James H. Johnson, and those committee heads elected by the church to supervise various phases of new construction, members prepared to continue to worship in other quarters and to dig deeply into their pockets and savings accounts to build a new church that everyone would be proud of.

The folks at Mount Pisgah Academy, a Seventh-day Adventist school, offered a building for West Asheville Baptist's Sunday morning worship, and the burned-out congregation gratefully accepted and met there for several weeks.

When the debris was cleared away at the church's Haywood Road site, the congregation moved back there and worshiped in the chapel, doing two services on Sunday.

And then the huge steel ribs of the new structure began to rise and the people took heart. They pledged what they could to make up the difference between the insurance settlements and the $1.88 million that the new building would cost.

Day by day the building grew, and in recent months as the congregation could see what the new church looked like, it became apparent that the money they had given would not be enough.

So they divided themselves into work parties, rolled up their sleeves and pitched in on weekends to work on the building, cleaning up, doing what they could without getting in the way of the contractors.

Saturday Revelations

It was a revelation on Saturdays to see 90-year-old Ann Cogburn working with the rest, making dust fly with her broom.

"The work days," said Coy Mehaffey, chairman of the publicity committee, "are to help us meet our deadline."

But there remained the nagging problem of an additional $225,000 needed to go into the new building debt-free.

With the end of its 30-month ordeal in sight, the church decided to make a last effort to raise the $225,000.

On Sept. 16 the members scheduled a fellowship dinner in the new church. With permission of the contractors and inspectors, temporary tables and lights were set up in the unfinished sanctuary and 300 came to eat and see.

"Our church has been split up for so long," said Mehaffey, "it was good just to see each other together."

They also saw something else. On that evening, members gave $79,705 in cash for the building fund, and pledged $47,838 more, collectible by the end of the calendar year.

That was a total of $127,543 given that evening for the building fund. In addition, they also gave $7,905.95 for the budget that day, making a grand total of $135,448.95 given by the membership of the church in one day.

"We don't know whether that's a record," said Coy Mehaffey, "but we're all satisfied that we will reach our goal and go into the new building sometime in November debt-free."

The following week, the Rev. Johnson told the congregation, "Surely last Sunday was a day of victory. It is a privilege to be a member of a church whose love for our Lord and the church is so apparent."

Carpet is scheduled to go into the sanctuary this week, pews next week, and the church hopes that the second Sunday in November will be a day of celebration and dedication.

And the end of a long, hard journey.

Anyway he slices it, it's time to retire

Friendly Grocery's sandwich man calls quits after 36 years

EWART BALL/Times

Sandwich production line

Don Russell, wife Marian and helper Carl Neff in deli at Friendly Grocery

By Mike Sharsky
Staff Writer

In less than a month, a 36-year tradition comes to an end in West Asheville. The sandwich man is retiring.

The first thing you notice when you go in the Friendly Grocery at the corner of Haywood Road and Burton Street is the loud cowbell that rings right over your head.

Then you turn left down a narrow aisle and before you see it, you hear it, the sizzle of food on the grill. And you smell it, pungent and meaty.

It's Don Russell's deli, home of 149 different sandwiches, and after Dec. 31 the Russell magic will work no more.

"We just tried to live up to the name that was already here, Friendly Grocery," Russell said, perched companionably on a stack of milk carton cases. "You know what Wachovia's slogan is, don't you — we've got a million customers 'cause we treat 'em one at a time. That's how we do things here."

Russell's magic is many things, not the least of which is personal service. Since Jan. 8, 1949, he and his wife, Marian, married since 1942, and a scattering of helpers have greeted the patron with the kind of quick and easy "Can I help you?" that sounds a little warmer in the close confines of a small family business.

"The people of the community can call him friend," Carl Neff said. "Everybody that comes in, it's 'Mr. Don.'" Neff is a doctoral candidate in theology who has worked as sandwich manager for some months.

"I've eaten his sandwiches for years," Neff said.

"It was in April he came," Russell said softly, "about two weeks before mama died."

Annie Green contributed homemade kosher pickles, pickled beans and part of the family in the family business before her death this year.

Russell turns 65 on Jan. 8. He doesn't want to give up the store, neither does Marian, but since a heart attack five years ago Russell can't get health insurance and he fears a sudden financial blow.

"I'm considered a candidate for open-heart surgery now. That's 30, 40 thousand dollars, and the insurance companies don't want to carry me." A trace of bitterness shades into his voice and Marian's when they talk about their previous carrier, who they said dropped Don from the rolls after his heart attack.

"Some other company came along and bought them, and when they did that they dropped a bunch of people like me. Now I've got a pre-existing condition, and I can't get insurance. I'd like to work until I was 70."

Will someone carry on the tradition?

"It's debatable," Russell said. "We didn't set out to pre-sell because I wanted to work the full year, I didn't want somebody coming in and saying they wanted it in November. I just started to advertise this month.

"Whoever buys it can do what they want with it."

They will be hard pressed to keep the magic alive. It's in the spanking clean, freshly painted and scrubbed walls and floors, tended to by hands that love their work. It's in the small but carefully tended stock, kept just so for the needs of a neighborhood it has served for decades. It's the magic of daily rituals: old and comfortable customers; children to see Mr. Don; voices raised just right to reach any part of the store from any other part; movements of hands and feet that know their way around and the places of everything in the store without thinking; banter with a delivery man who has delivered and bantered longer than most couples today stay married.

"I guess I've walked enough miles on this floor to go around the world," Russell said.

And, of course, there are the sandwiches.

Subs beyond count, really, because if it isn't one of the 149 listed, it gets made anyway.

"If we can't make it, we'll fake it," Neff said, two-fisted sandwiches with as much meat and cheese and whatever hanging out the sides as between the bread. Sandwiches with verve, with moxie.

And then there are the big ones.

"We had a 6-foot sandwich on this block yesterday," Russell said, pointing to the top of a cooler covered in butcher paper.

The cooler is Russell's table, and it serves admirably.

The cowbell rings and two girls walk in. Marian is working the register. Neff runs up to help. "You dropped a quarter," Russell calls out, excusing himself in the middle of talking about catering hors d'ouevres to business meetings to run up and help the other two. "Have a merry Christmas," the girls call out in chorus, and the salutation is returned.

A sandwich eaten at the Friendly Grocery is a rambling meal, like the slower tick of a summer's day clock. John Keats would have liked to eat here.

"We've got what you call a variety store, three sections we kind of specialize in," Russell said. "That's our cigarette section, our deli section and our grocery section."

Yes, the cigarette section, somehow incongruous in this very proper establishment where no man shall buy wine or beer and no fly dare tread. The Friendly Grocery overflows with cigarettes, cartons stacked by the hundreds in what should be dairy freezers.

"When they built I-240 about 20 years ago, people would stop in and buy cigarettes," Russell said. "We've had people from all over the world stop in and buy cigarettes. We've kind of built up our cigarette business from that year.

"We're well known in West Asheville. We're well known through this part of the country. People can't wait to get one of our sandwiches," Russell said, becoming animated. He leans across the cooler. "They talk about it for miles before they get here, about the sandwich they're going to get."

Then the fact of his retirement intrudes and he settles back.

"I guess they say you can get caught up in 30 days. After that, after that I guess I'll just retire."

Russell pulls out a letter from what he calls "a rank stranger," an Atlanta man just passing through who just happened to stop and sit a spell.

"I'm no exception to the fast pace of current times," the visitor wrote, "but for a brief moment, you may not realize, you took my thoughts back to a time I much prefer, when people were just people. Friendly Grocery is everything the name implies."

Asheville Citizen December 17, 1984

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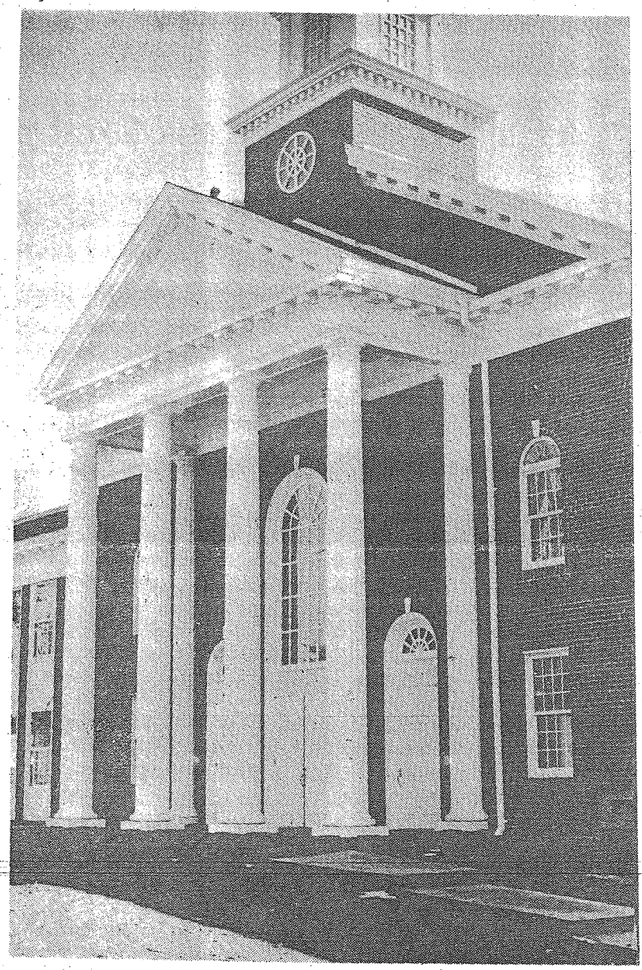
THE NATIVE STONE

"Truth Is Rarely Pure And Never Simple."
Oscar Wilde

VOLUME 15, NUMBER 9 ASHEVILLE, NORTH CAROLINA FEBRUARY 28, 1985

By Jo Parker



WEST ASHEVILLE BAPTIST CHURCH SANCTUARY, rises again ready for Service on Sunday morning.

Photo By Bob Morrell

FROM THESE ASHES

"We have looked forward to this for the past three years; and its going to be great to have all our Members together again, we have been split up holding two services in our Chapel." said Coy Mehaffey, Public Relations Director of the West Asheville Baptist Church.

The West Asheville Baptist Church fire was caused by lightning striking the steeple during a violent thunder storm that struck the Asheville area in the spring of 1982.

An Asheville fireman,Raymond Flowers, lost his life in the fire, when a section of the building collapsed, and trapped him in the sanctuary.

Dr. James H. Johnson, pastor will conduct the service at 11:00 am on Sunday, March 3rd, in the new sanctuary which seats 825 people downstairs, 225 upstairs, and 100 in the choir. The new sanctuary is a fan shaped design, which brings everyone closer to the pastor. The congregation hopes to go into the new sanctuary debt free, by the time it is dedicated on March 31st. Their Ingathering Service will be held on March 10th, at which time they hope to raise $78,000.

The Reverend Nane Starnes will preach the Dedication Sermon on March 31st. Rev. Starnes served the West Asheville Baptist Church for many years; and was responsible for much of the construction that was destroyed in the fire. The new sanctuary was built at a cost in excess of 2 million dollars.

From April 21-26th, service of Praise and Thanksgiving will be held by former pastors and staff of the church.

West Asheville Baptist Church has been an integral part of the West Asheville community for many, many years. The new Building at 926 Haywood Road in West Asheville is alive and well. The Phoenix has risen from the ashes to once again be a positive influence on the community.

Photography by Jo Parker

SCENE AT WEST ASHEVILLE BAPTIST CHURCH THREE YEARS AGO AS Fireman and other workers searched the fiery ruins for a missing Fireman.

A CROSS OF TWISTED STEEL marked the place three years ago where lightning struck the steeple of West Asheville Baptist Church.

West Asheville landmark to house school

Rainbow Mountain Children's School has found a permanent home at 574 Haywood Road. The home was the home of Dr. Porter Bynum Orr. It's "one of the finest residential structures still standing on Haywood Road," said Doug Swaim, Preservation Specialist in the NC Western Office of Archives & History.

This old building is being renovated to accomodate all of the classes of Rainbow Mountain School, preschool, kindegarten and elementary (grades 1&2). It will also accommodate the elementary program as it expands.

The new home of Rainbow Mountain School was designed and built by

see Rainbow Mountain pg. 3

THE NEW HOME of Rainbow Mountain School is at 574 Haywood Road in West Asheville. The familiar old home was the first house on Haywood Road, built around 1907. Photo by Fenno

Rainbow Mountain

continued from page 1

Dr. Porter Bynum Orr around 1907. It was the first house built on Haywood Road. Stylistically a cross between colonial revival and late Victorian with a full 4000 square feet. The current floor plan is almost unaltered from the original.

The exterior is brick and pebbledash. "The entrance with its beveled glass doors; the large open hallway adjoined to the dining room and semi-divided by columns; the hardwood parquet floor; the enclosed porch with its quarry tile floors; the slate roofs; the coal fireplaces with original iron gratings; all these features bespeak a finesse and elegance to be found only in a historic home. It is one of the finest residential structures still standing on Haywood Road," said Ashrite Laird, director of the school.

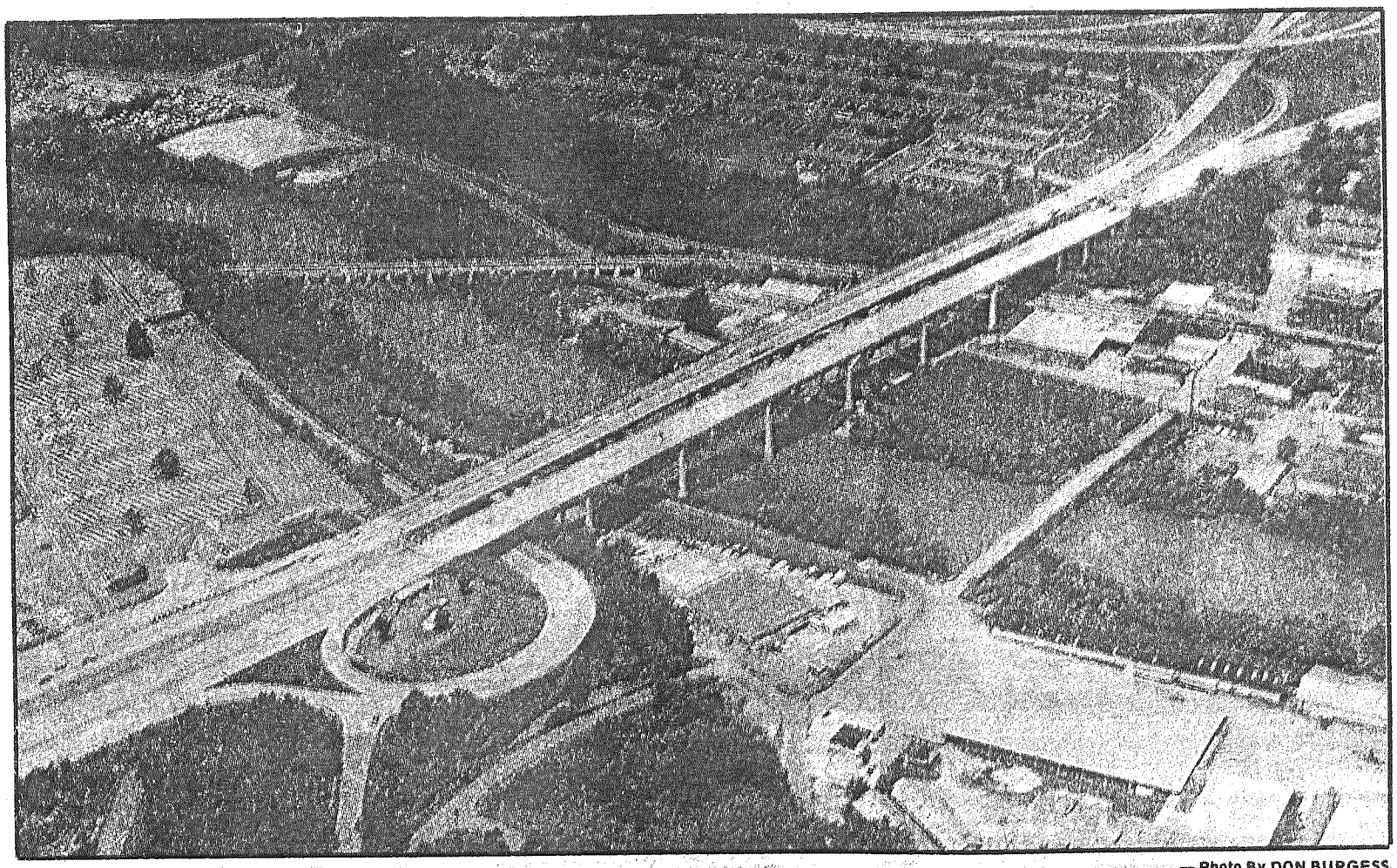
Originally it was a large estate of many acres. On it Dr. Orr raised a huge orchard of apples, peaches, cherries, a large vineyard, a vegetable garden, and most notably a large raised rose garden formed of three concentric squares with interconnecting cement walkways.

He also raised chickens and dairy cows who were led daily to pasture in his meadow on Louisiana where the Armory now stands. As busy as he was with his professional practice, Dr. Orr devoted extensive amounts of time to his plants, many of which were donated by the Biltmore Estate. He himself cast the cement flower boxes in which he grew geraniums that were wintered over in the greenhouse attached to the back of the house.

Dr. Orr died in 1947. Ten years later his family sold the house to the Stroupe family who established a nursing home there for twenty years. John and Ashrita Laird are the third owners and custodians of the building.

Asheville Citizen August 1985?

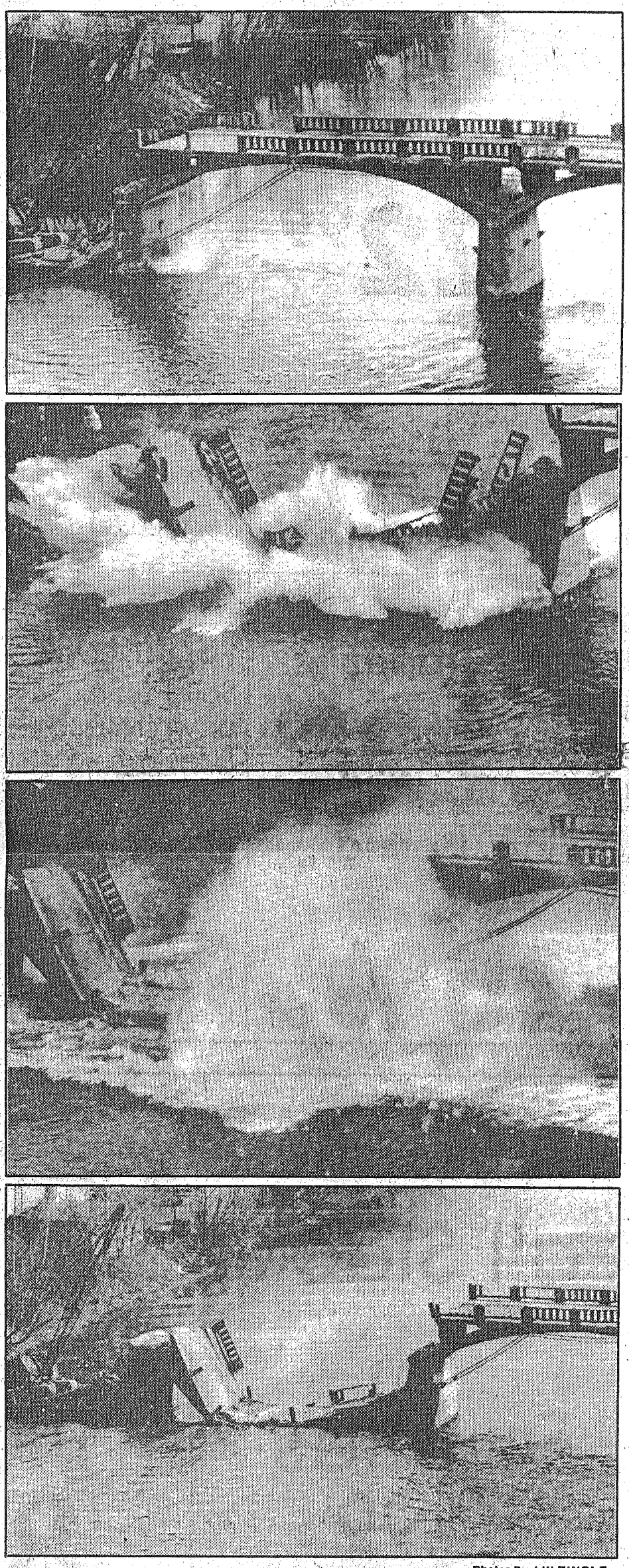
Aug. 10, 1985



— Photo By DON BURGESS

An Aerial View Of Smoky Park Bridge Gives No Indication Of Steel and Concrete Work Going On Below

Feb. 8, 1986



— Photos By J.W. TINGLE

Going Down

A span in the old Smith Bridge goes down as workmen demolish the structure that served for years as a major route across the French Broad River in Asheville. The demolition started Monday and only two spans remained standing Friday. The state Board of Transportation plans to award a contract for a replacement bridge in June.

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EDITOR'S NOTE: The following article is reprinted with the permission of the publisher. It originally appeared in the March 1986 edition of *The State* magazine.

Discipline Was No Problem At Bingham School

By Billy Arthur

When it was time for punishment, the famed school master offered students a choice of "Dr. Black or Dr. Brown."

Today's opponents of corporal punishment in the schools would certainly have targeted **Col. Robert Bingham**, once called "North Carolina's greatest schoolmaster." As joint or head principal of mobile Bingham School from 1860 to 1927, he not only inflicted bodily punishment with leather strops but also encouraged students to "fight out" their enmity and confined disobedient ones to cramped solitary guard houses.

Students took their punishment good-naturedly, because that was the tradition and code of the historic school, founded in Wilmington in 1793 by the colonel's grandfather, then moved to Pittsboro, the Oaks and Mebane in Orange County and finally to Asheville in 1890.

Many students reported they never knew of any classmate who ever bore the "national figure in education" any ill will. M.C.S. Noble, longtime dean of the UNC School of Education who had been a Bingham student, called him "just and fair." The solid foundation on which the strict discipline rested was Col. Bingham's constant effort to build up in the boys their inborn sense of right and honor."

The 10 Guard Houses

Everyone who got more than a certain number of demerits within a week was imprisoned in a guard house all day on Monday, which was the weekly holiday, instead of Saturday as at most schools.

The ten guard houses were about four feet wide by five feet long with a cowcatcher extension at one end to accommodate the feet if one chose to lie down. Entering just after breakfast, the student received his midday meal on a tray and was released just in time for supper.

Often there were more culprits than guard houses; so, for some there was the alternative punishment -- a vigorous beating with a leather strop by the colonel himself. But no boy was ever beaten against his will. He was always permitted to do his turn in the guard house when one became available on a Monday.

Another student, *Chapel Hill Weekly* editor Louis Graves, said he had seen more than a half dozen boys at a time crowding around the colonel on Mondays, each insisting he preferred a thrashing to confinement. "It hurt and it hurt bad," Graves said from experience, "but when it was all over the slate had been wiped clean."

No Disgrace

There was no secrecy about the whipping. Nobody cared if other boys came into the room. "It was a tradition that no disgrace was attached to the lickin' -- it was simply a price that was paid for excessive neglect of the rules -- for idleness, for lack of cleanliness of room or person and so on," Graves said.

The candidates would come in after breakfast, and the colonel would take down two thick strops -- one black and one brown -- about two inches wide. Very ceremoniously, he would ask the boy to choose "either Dr. Black or Dr. Brown." Also the boy chose whether he would be licked on the hands, legs, "the sitter," or equally distributed. Both Graves and Noble said the boys took it almost without flinching, then went happily off to Asheville for the holiday.

Though the rules forbade fighting, if enmity between two boys reached a boiling point, Col. Bingham sanctioned a fight -- in the presence of him and the student body -- but only after he had failed to get the boys to settle their differences without one. The whole school gathered between the dormitories with Col. Bingham as referee. Each boy had his partisans who cheered when blows were landed.

The colonel was completely in charge. There were no fixed rules. If the fighters clinched too long, he separated them; if they evidenced fatigue, he called for rest. When they became exhausted or had had enough, they went to their rooms, "washed up, applied salve and lotion, and -- no longer snarling -- were in column when the battalion marched to the mess hall," Graves recalled.

Smoking

Not in accord with Col. Bingham's strict policies was his toleration of smoking when it did not interfere with classroom or military duties. However, because of danger of fire, a student would be expelled forthwith for "smoking in the bunk."

Col. Bingham's stated educational creed was to "make men of boys . . . Our men stand at the top everywhere they go. We have taught 5,000 boys. Ninety-five percent have made good, five percent went to the dogs . . . and ten percent of those had already gone to the dogs . . . before we got them," he said in 1920.

Graves said Bingham "demanded and compelled close attention to classroom duties. He believed in a simple curriculum and in thoroughness. He sought to develop in boys a devotion to truth, honor and courage. Long before the honor system was much talked about, it was functioning admirable at Bingham School."

Col. Bingham was a leader in establishment of NC State College, of the NC College for Women at Greensboro (now UNC-G), and adoption of a compulsory school law state-wide. Through his efforts Asheville was the first city in the south with compulsory education. He died in 1938. A son, Robert, once owned and published the Louisville (Ky.) *Courier-Journal* newspaper.

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Heritage Page

April, 2001

A T 6-18-86

Landmark goes down

The old Vance Elementary School on Sulphur Springs Road was demolished Tuesday to make way for a new school building under construction behind it. The school was built in 1922, said Roy Harwood, principal at Vance. While the old school will be missed, Harwood said teachers and students are looking forward to the modern convenienees of the new building, scheduled for completion in August. Students in the neighborhood gathered to watch the demolition.

BILL FORTNEY/Times

Asheville Citizen June 18, 1986

Asheville Company Joins N.C. Top 100

By DAVID NIVENS AC-T 6-12-86
Business Editor

One of Asheville's oldest firms has been added to the state's leading list of 100 largest private companies while the area's largest soft drink bottler has been recognized as an "up and comer" among private operations.

Dr. T.C. Smith Co. Inc., a wholesale distributor of prescription drugs, health and beauty aids and surgical supplies ranked 29th on the N.C. 100 list released Wednesday.

The Arthur Anderson & Co. accounting firm accepted the company for its first appearance on the 3-year-old list. Although qualifying earlier for recognition, the Smith company did not seek it.

"We put our name in the pot to get on the list," said Frank S. Smith III, chief executive officer of the family-held firm. "We had to find out what to do and we also found a competitor on the list. That got our interest, too."

Sales ranked just under the $100 million category in 1985, according to Arthhur Anderson, but Smith said he expected sales to top $100 million by 1987.

Founded in Charlotte in 1869, the Smith company moved to Asheville in 1886. Frank Smith and his brother Canie, chief operating officer, are the fourth generation of the family to operate the firm which has offices on N. Hanover Street.

Blue Bell Inc. of Greensboro claimed the top spot on the list. The textile and apparel firm had sales of $1 billion.

The 100 companies account for $9.5 billion in annual sales and employ 128,000 people.

Blue Bell claimed the top spot last year after going private in a leveraged buyout in 1984. The annual survey excludes companies whose stock is traded in public markets, companies not headquartered in North Carolina and those that are subsidiaries of out-of-state companies. No banks and other financial institutions, real estate companies or retailers appear on the list.

The list shows 53 of the state's 100 largest privately held companies are involved in manufacturing, 27 in distribution, 11 in construction, seven in service industries and two in transportation.

"We basically are a logistics company," Smith said. "We get the product from the warehouse to the customer usually within 24 hours."

The company, which employs 140 people, serves most of North Carolina and portions of Tennessee. The company has grown despite the trend toward consolidation in the business. Modern equipment, including computers, helps the operation, Smith said. There are only three similar distribution operations in North Carolina.

The firm also operates the W.H. King division and Carolina Surgical Supplies in Raleigh.

Another WNC firm new to the list was Tanner Companies Inc. of Rutherfordton, a maker of women's dresses and sportswear. It was added to the list of companies with sales under $50 million at No. 86. James T. Tanner, chief executive officer, was unavailable for comment Wednesday.

Moving up on the list from 28th to 20th was Coca-Cola Bottling Co. of the Western Carolinas Inc. The company made Arthur Anderson's list of "Up and Comers" because of expansions. The firm acquired bottlers in North Wilkesboro in North Carolina and in Anderson, S.C., in the last year, said Thomas E. Nash Jr., chief executive officer.

Coca-Cola bottlers own the franchise rights for the company beverages in their markets. As private companies, they also can bottle other brands.

"We have over 300 brands and packages," Nash said. "We are the 15th largest Coke bottler in the United States."

Nash's company made the list in the $100 million to $249 million sales category.

Headquarted on Biltmore Avenue, the company controls Coke markets in all of western South Carolina, except Spartanburg, and all of Western North Carolina west of Hickory.

"We know the growth has contributed to the move on the list," Nash said. "We expect to grow more."

Asheville Citizen June 12, 1986

11/14/1986

New Vance School Worth The Waiting

By MONA MOORE
Staff Writer AC 11-14-86

The cafeteria and the library were the first things to go. Then part of the parking lot, the playground equipment and the ballfield.

For more than a year, students and staff at Vance Elementary School on Sulphur Springs Road watched as a new school went up while their old one came down.

When the lunchroom was demolished, meals were brought in from Hall Fletcher Middle School and students ate in classrooms. When the library was torn down, two teachers were moved to make way for shelves of books.

"We had this school in mind — that's why we were able to put up with it," principal Roy Harwood said Thursday. "The teachers, the students and the parents were very cooperative in putting up with the inconvenience."

The $4.1 million building, which was designed by Wood and Cort, P.A., has a brown brick exterior and contains some 64,000 square feet of space.

Outside the main office hangs a 6-by-8-foot woodcarving of Vance Birthplace, created by Harwood and teachers Billie Lewis and Terry Hall to make students more aware of their mountain heritage.

Inside is a reception area, Harwood's office, a first-aid room and a conference room.

Down the hall is an auditorium with carpeted risers that will seat up to 500 people.

Classrooms with sinks and 12-foot cabinets are situated on the other end of the building — grades two and three on one side, four and five on the other.

A library, a teacher's lounge and a workroom also are located on the second floor.

Downstairs are kindergarten and first-grade classrooms, a cafeteria

See VANCE, Page 22

that will soon include salad bars and self-serve lines for older students, a gymnasium with basketball goals that can be adjusted to different heights, art and music rooms and "the pit," a room that can hold up to four classes for plays, films and other activities.

Kindergarten classrooms contain 11,000 to 12,000 square feet of floor space and miniature stoves and refrigerators.

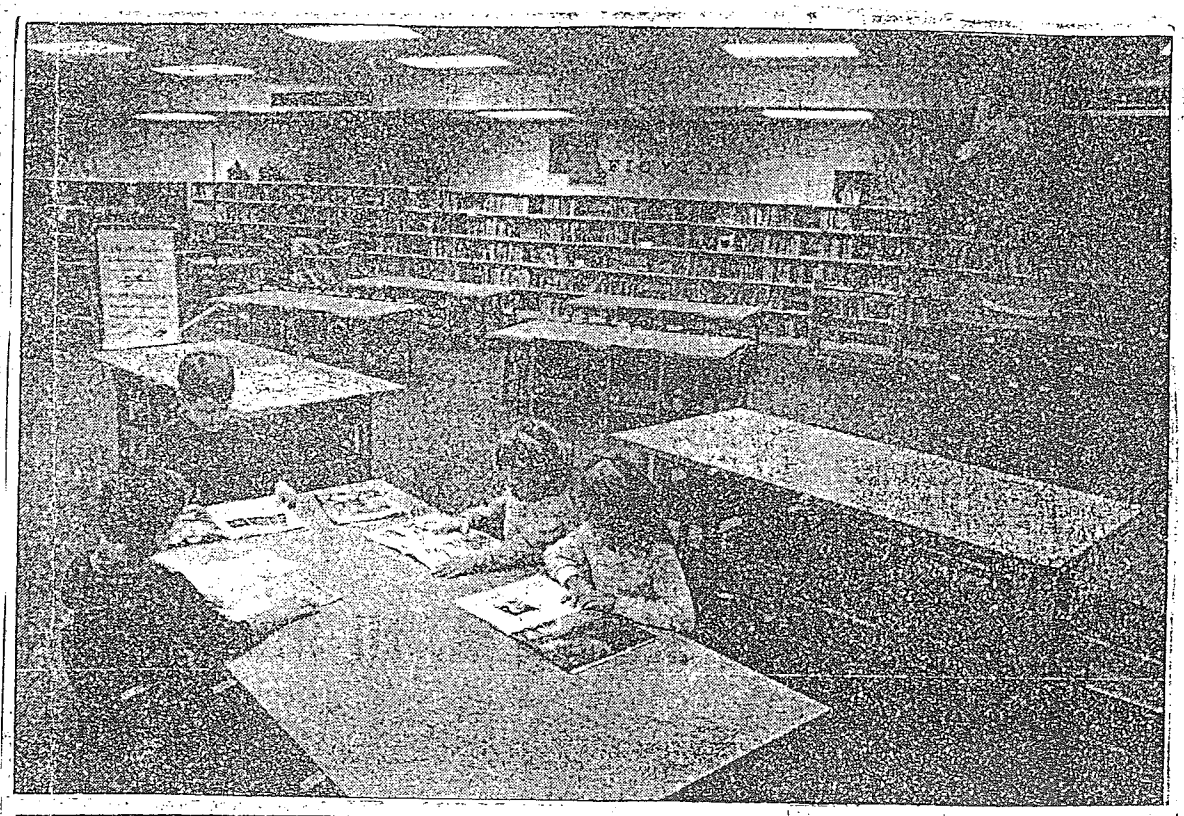
The building is air conditioned and fully carpeted except for the hallways and tiled areas in front of the sinks in each classroom. Showers are located on each floor, and an elevator has been provided for handicapped students.

Superintendent Donald Jones said the new school, which replaced a building that was constructed in 1928, is "extremely functional" and attractive, and he gives much of the credit to the staff.

"The staff, along with some parents, developed their educational specifications and in that had what we would call a dream list and wrote what they would consider the ideal situation.

"The surprising thing is that the architects incorporated most of those ideas and concepts, and they have become a reality."

Jones will be the main speaker at a dedication ceremony at 2 p.m. Sunday in the auditorium. A reception and tour of the building will follow.



New School

First-graders Chad Allegra, Cliff Kent, Alysia Towe and Jane Lance (clockwise from left) spend a few minutes with their favorite storybook characters in the library at the new Vance Elementary School, while second-graders Mitsy Williams, left, and Natasha Boseman tackle a math problem with the help of a computer.

Abandoned Woman's Body Identified

By TINA HILTON
Staff Writer AC-2-16-87

A 22-year-old Asheville woman, found shot to death Saturday afternoon along a deserted city road, spent her last hours baking Valentine's Day cookies for her sweetheart, police said Sunday.

The woman was identified late Saturday night as Pamela Michelle Murray of 786 Sand Hill Road, according to Asheville police detective Jon Kirkpatrick.

Murray was found in a puddle of blood along Azalea Road in east Asheville shortly before 1:30 p.m. Saturday by passing motorists, he said. She was lying on her back near a trash-scattered wooded area about a mile from Recreation Park, the detective said. Azalea Road connects east Tunnel Road to N.C. 81.

Police spent most of Saturday in the rain questioning residents and businesses in the east end of Asheville about the woman, but received no leads.

She was identified late Saturday by her stepfather, James Lackey, of the same address, after he filed a missing person's report at the police department.

Lackey told police he became worried about his stepdaughter when she did not meet her fiance, John Huggins of Pisgah Forest, at 6 p.m. Saturday as planned.

Murray was last seen by her grandmother, who lives a few blocks from the Lackeys, between 12 and 12:30 p.m. Saturday. "She spent the day baking cookies with her grandmother to take to her boyfriend's house for Valentine's Day," Kirkpatrick said.

Neighbors also reported seeing Murray around that time.

Police located Murray's automobile at Asheville Mall early Sunday morning. The car could help lead to the killer, Kirkpatrick said.

The 1982 Oldsmobile, impounded by police, will be searched for evidence Monday morning, the detective said.

"Right now we're at a standstill until we process that car," he said.

A preliminary search by Kirkpatrick revealed a "slight struggle" probably occurred before the shooting. The cookies Murray had baked were scattered throughout the car, he said. "There was a little bit of disarray," Kirkpatrick said.

He added, "I don't think she was at the mall, though. I think the car was driven there by the suspect."

The investigation took another turn Sunday when an autopsy revealed Murray died of a gunshot wound to the head rather than to the back as police first suspected. Kirkpatrick said she was shot once in the head and once in the back, and sustained a gash above her left eye probably when she hit the paved road.

Kirkpatrick believes a medium-size handgun was used as the weapon.

Police also are investigating the possibility that Murray was sexually assaulted. "There weren't any visual signs of an assault, but we're waiting on results from the lab to be sure," Kirkpatrick said.

Results should be available from the state bureau of investigation office in Raleigh within a week, he said.

Murray had been dead less than an hour when she was discovered, Kirkpatrick said. Rescue personnel attempted to revive Murray at the scene, but were unsuccessful. She was pronounced dead around 1:30 p.m.

The victim was described by family and friends as a homebody. "They said she had no enemies, didn't go out — a decent girl," Kirkpatrick said. "She went home, to work, and to her boyfriend's house — that's about it."

Beulah Wilson, who lives across the street from the Lackeys, said she was stunned to hear of Murray's violent death. "I've tried to figure out what happened to her," Wilson said. "Being a good person, I just can't believe anybody would do something like that to her."

Wilson last saw Murray Friday when she checked her mail.

"She was a wonderful person," Wilson said, breaking into tears. "I'm just as sorry as I can be that this has happened. All the neighbors are. We all hurt over it."

Anyone having information on Murray's whereabouts between 12 and 1:30 p.m. Saturday or the shooting are asked to call Kirkpatrick at the police department.

Asheville Citizen February 16, 1987

Old house 'nobody knows about'

By Nancy Marlowe
Horizon Editor

Local historians say there are four ante-bellum brick houses in Asheville and that the John Reynolds house at 52 Westwood Place is "the one nobody knows about."

The others, according to *Cabins and Castles, An Architectural History of Asheville and Buncombe County* are the Smith-McDowell House, Ravenscroft School and the Reynolds house on Reynolds Mountain at Newbridge, now a bed and breakfast called The Old Reynolds Mansion.

Sara Reynolds Beatty of Leicester Highway, a great-great-great neice of John Reynolds, said the house was built in 1856 of brick handmade by slaves. It stood on a 200-acre farm facing the dirt road that meandered down to the Smith Bridge on the French Broad River. In those days, the road was called the Haywood Road and led west to Canton. Now the city has grown up around the farmhouse and the dirt track is Westwood Place. Haywood Road has been rerouted.

The Reynolds house is generally believed to be the oldest house in West Asheville. The rambling brick house at 82 Westwood Place, called Seven Oaks, is dated about 1860, according to *Cabins and Castles.*

Behind the John Reynolds house, now vacant and for sale, stands an old elm and beyond that tangled underbrush. Some say the foundations for slave quarters are hidden by the weeds. Also hidden are remnants of the ice house used to store blocks of ice cut from the French Broad River for use in summer. Beatty says old-fashioned flowering shrubs Reynolds imported from South Carolina still grow there.

According to the present owner, Merle Koester, an antiques collector, the farmland has been sold away until the house stands on less than half an acre.

A chronology of the house compiled by Koester shows that the property was sold by a member of the Reynolds family in 1924 and that on Jan. 16, 1933, the land on which the house stood was seized by the Central Bank and Trust for non-payment. When the bank failed, the deed ended up in the hands of Consolidated Realty. There follows in rapid succession a number of owners.

On Feb. 5, 1980, the property was bought at auction on the courthouse steps by Keith Randolph. The house reportedly had stood vacant for 16 years. On Dec. 23, 1987, Randolph sold the property to the current owners, Merle and Walter Koester.

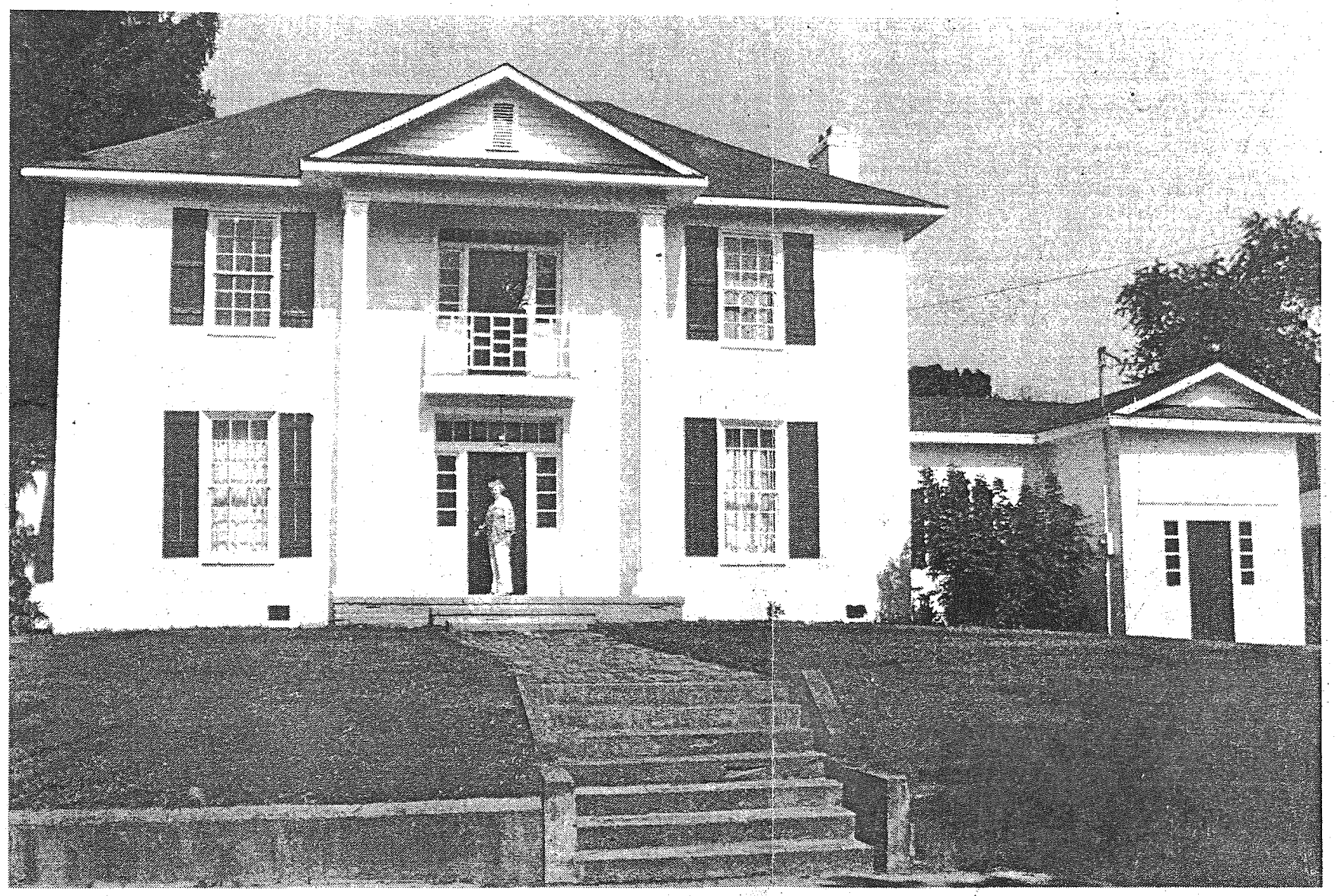
Merle Koester said there is great curiosity about the old house. "People often stop by and ask to peek inside," she said.

The handmade brick have been painted white. Dark green shutters frame the original six-over-six windows.

The house was built with a wide central hallway leading to a covered back porch. Large rooms flanked the hallway, from which a flight of stairs led to the second floor. When bathrooms were added upstairs and down, the floorplan was altered and the stairway reversed.

The interior partitions are of brick and about 12 inches thick. In the 1930s, brick walls were paneled over with pine. Little of the original fabric of the house shows on the inside. High ceilings and large rooms hint at its former graciousness.

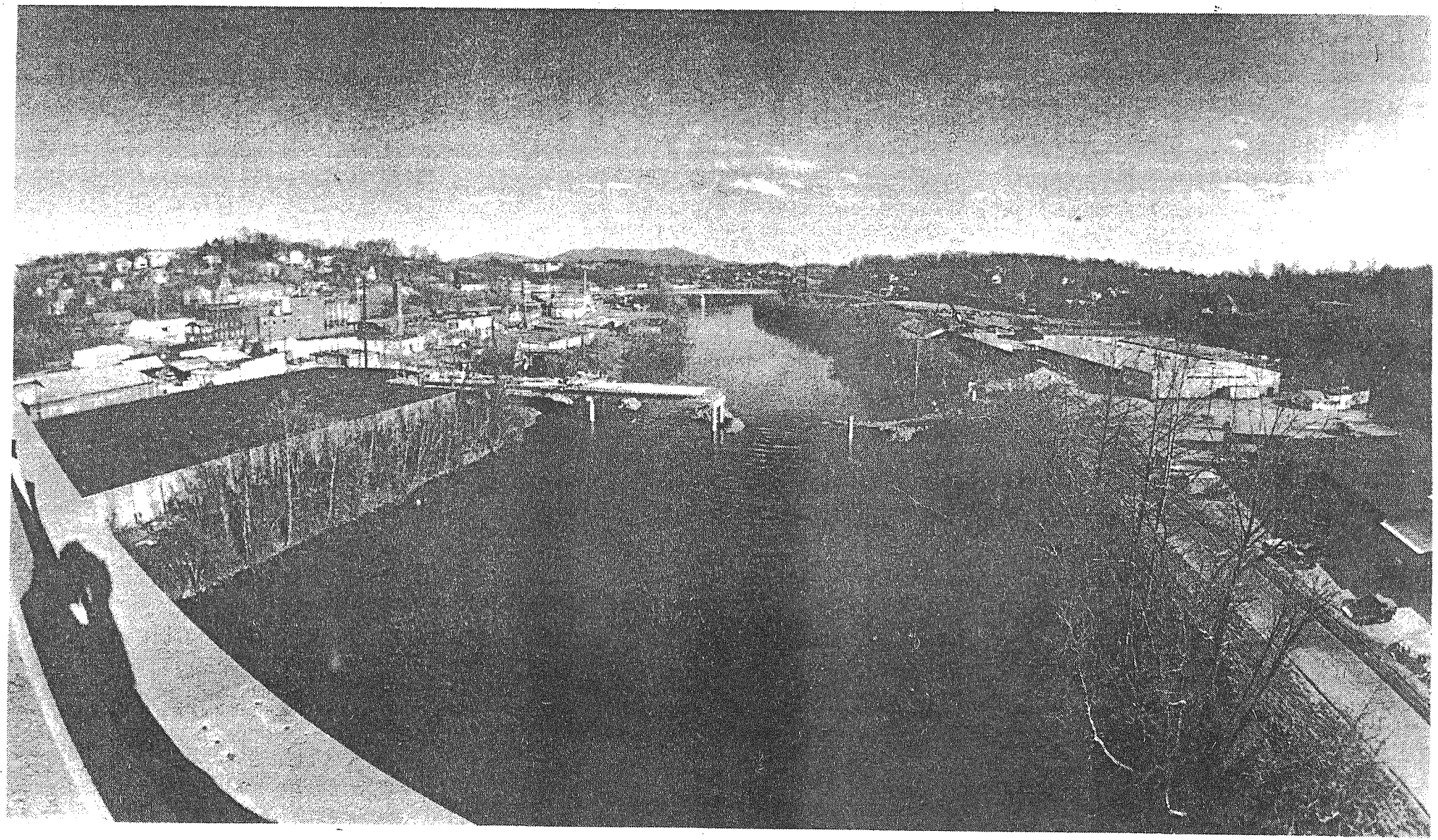
John Reynolds, who built it was a farmer and clergyman, who rode the Methodist circuit and was first pastor of Central Methodist Church. He and his brother, Will, made bricks at a kiln in Emma. John also operated the Carolina House, an inn in downtown Asheville.



EWART BALL/Times

John Reynolds built this house at 52 Westwood Place in 1856 of hand-made brick

In those days, it was a farmhouse on 200 acres on a dirt track winding to the French Broad River at Smith Bridge



Industrialization As Seen From Smoky Park Bridge

Greyhound Lines Closes Haywood Bus Terminal In Trailways Merger

By MARK DAVIS
Staff Writer AC 10-16-87

Greyhound Lines Inc. put the brakes Tuesday on its Haywood Road terminal.

Beginning Wednesday, passengers and packages on Greyhound Lines Inc. or Trailways Corp.'s Asheville-bound buses all traveled to the former Trailways terminal on Tunnel Road in Asheville — the final local stop in a national merger of the two bus lines.

"It's all going through the Trailways terminal now," said Bob White, a Charlotte-based regional sales manager for Greyhound. "We're not using the Haywood Road terminal any more."

That terminal officially closed at midnight Tuesday. As the clock ticked toward daylight Wednesday, buses — those bearing the red-and-white Trailways logo and those imprinted with Greyhound's running dog — all traveled across town to the newer terminal at the mouth of Beaucatcher Tunnel.

Six Greyhound buses stop daily at the terminal, said terminal agent David Beams. Fourteen Trailways buses also stop there for a total of 20 stops daily, Greyhound officials said.

Beams, who operates the terminal on commission, brought himself and five other employees from the former Greyhound location to the Tunnel Road stop. They replaced six people who operated that terminal for the past year.

C.A. Mitchell Jr., the Tunnel Road terminal's former manager, said a new crew came with the new buses. He and five others lost their jobs Tuesday night.

"We kind of thought this would happen," he said. "When we heard Trailways had been bought, we knew it was just a matter of time."

They heard about the transaction in July when federal transportation regulators approved the $80 million purchase. Bus drivers across the nation began stopping at new terminals as the two lines merged services.

By August, Greyhound had consolidated services in 195 of 250 locations, but had not decided which terminal would be the final stopping point in Asheville.

Greyhound officials made their decision several weeks ago, said White. The Asheville move was the last terminal consolidation in Greyhound's nine-state Southeastern district, he said.

"The Tunnel Road terminal is newer and in better shape," he said. "It's the best of the two."

The other terminal is empty. Two signs posted on its doors direct potential passengers to the Tunnel Road location.

The merger means improved service and quicker trips, said Beams. On Thursday, as passengers — a couple of bored young military men, a mother, two older men smoking cigarettes — waited for connections, he said customers are getting a better deal.

"This makes for a larger operation," he said.

For example, bus passengers who traveled Trailways to Charlotte had to stop in Greenville, S.C. Now, Charlotte-bound buses go there directly from Asheville, he said.

"We think it's better service," he said.

So did Delores Charnick. The Gloucester, Va., resident watched her 3-year-old daughter as the two waited for their connecting bus back home. Charnick took the bus to see her parents and enjoyed the trip.

"It's been smoother, more comfortable," she said. "I don't know about anybody else, but I haven't had any problems."

Other passengers may never notice a change, said White. Though it bought the other bus line, Greyhound won't alter the familiar red-and-white Trailways emblems, he said.

"Some customers prefer it, so we're going to leave them like that," he said. "It's going to be part of our new advertising campaign: 'Get the best of both.' "

— Photo By MARK DAVIS

Waiting For The Bus

Passengers await a ride at the Greyhound/Trailways terminal on Tunnel Road in Asheville.

Asheville Citizen October 16, 1987

Asheville Citizen & Times, Mon., Feb. 29, 1988

Youth Injured In Moped Wreck

An Asheville boy was seriously injured Saturday evening when he accidentally drove his moped into a telephone pole, authorities said Sunday.

Bryan E. Massie, 17, of 146 Delaware Ave., was riding his moped on a sidewalk near the intersection of Brevard and Davenport roads about 3 p.m. when the accident occurred, according to Sgt. Randy Cogburn of the Asheville Police Department.

Morris apparently was performing stunts with his moped, Cogburn said.

The boy, who was not wearing a helmet, suffered head injuries and was admitted to Memorial Mission Hospital where he remained in a coma Sunday night, Cogburn said.

Initially, authorities could not identify the boy because he was not carrying any identification. Shortly after 7:30 p.m., the boy was identified by an officer in the emergency room who recognized the victim.

West/ Christmas Lights

— Staff Photo By EWART BALL

STEVE HONEYCUTT of Asheville's Public Works and Traffic Engineering Division hangs Christmas decorations from a truck. The West Asheville Business Association raised money for the decorations to give Haywood Road the holiday spirit.

Table 1.3. Distribution of Farm Size in Mountain Counties, 1860

County	Total No. of Farms	Under 20 Acres		Under 50 Acres		Over 50 Acres		Over 100 Acres	
		No.	Percent	No.	Percent	No.	Percent	No.	Percent
Alleghany	347	23	6	118	34	229	66	125	36
Ashe	818	120	15	433	53	385	47	177	22
Buncombe	924	91	10	379	41	545	59	268	28
Burke	495	19	4	242	49	253	51	99	20
Caldwell	566	57	10	235	42	331	58	148	26
Cherokee	959	167	15	631	66	328	34	106	11
Haywood	441	54	12	213	48	228	52	106	24
Henderson	724	72	10	370	51	354	49	122	17
Jackson	493	116	23	321	65	172	35	46	9
Macon	632	128	20	372	59	260	41	77	12
Madison	493	91	18	273	55	220	44	96	20
McDowell	423	11	2	168	40	255	60	89	21
Watauga	598	145	24	428	72	170	28	60	10
Wilkes	1,324	119	9	730	55	594	45	219	16
Yancey	1,050	277	26	721	69	329	31	110	10
WNC Total	10,287	1,480	14	5,634	55	4,653	45	1,848	18
NC Total	67,022	6,929	10	27,811	41	39,211	59	20,715	31

Source: Computed from *Agriculture of the U.S. in 1860*, 210.

From *"Mountain Masters"*, John Inscoe, University of Tennessee Press, 1989

Table 3.1. Slaves as Percentages of Population of Western North Carolina Counties, 1850 and 1860

	1850			
County	Total Population	Slave Population	Percent of County Population	Free Black Population
Alleghany	—	—	—	—
Ashe	8,777	595	6.7	86
Buncombe	13,425	1,717	12.8	107
Burke	7,772	2,132	27.4	163
Caldwell	6,317	1,203	19.0	109
Cherokee	3,385	337	10.0	109
Haywood	7,074	418	5.9	15
Henderson	6,853	912	13.3	37
Jackson	—	—	—	—
Macon	6,389	549	8.6	106
Madison	—	—	—	—
McDowell	6,246	1,262	20.2	213
Watauga	3,400	129	3.7	29
Wilkes	12,079	1,142	9.4	224
Yancey	8,205	346	4.2	50

Source: *Seventh and Eighth U.S. Censuses:* 1850, table 1; 1860, tables 1 and 2.

Table 3.1., Continued

	1860			
County	Total Population	Slave Population	Percent of County Population	Free Black Population
Alleghany	3,590	206	5.7	33
Ashe	7,956	391	4.9	142
Buncombe	12,654	1,933	15.3	111
Burke	9,237	2,371	31.6	221
Caldwell	7,497	1,088	14.5	114
Cherokee	9,166	520	5.6	38
Haywood	5,801	313	5.4	14
Henderson	10,448	1,382	13.2	85
Jackson	5,501	268	4.8	6
Macon	6,004	519	8.6	115
Madison	5,908	213	3.6	17
McDowell	7,120	1,305	18.3	273
Watauga	4,957	104	2.0	81
Wilkes	14,749	1,208	8.2	261
Yancey	8,655	362	4.2	67

From *"Mountain Masters"*, John Inscoe, University of Tennessee Press, 1989

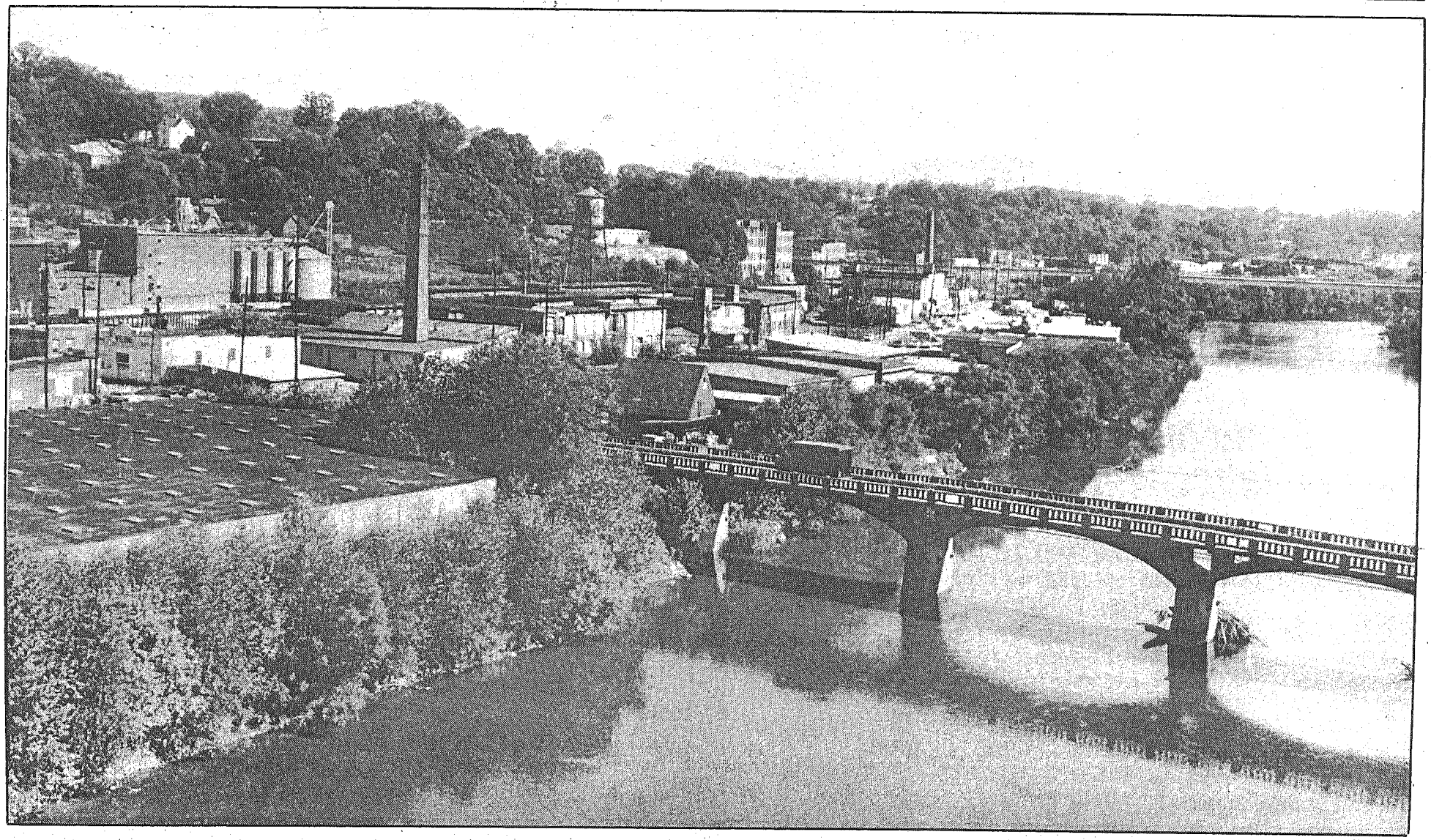
Table 3.2: Western North Carolina Slaveholders and the Distribution of Slaves, 1850 and 1860

Counties	Total No. of Slaveholders		Percentage of Total Heads of Households		Distribution of Slaves Owned							
					1–2 Slaves		3–9 Slaves		10–19 Slaves		20 or more Slaves	
	1850	1860	1850	1860	1850	1860	1850	1860	1850	1860	1850	1860
Alleghany	—	56	—	10.0	—	33	—	18	—	4	—	3
Ashe	132*	85	9.3	6.0	65	38	82	36	14	9	3	2
Buncombe	248	293	12.7	15.9	98	114	94	124	36	40	20	15
Burke	233	204	23.6	16.6	75	46	94	101	38	32	24	25
Caldwell	173	177	18.6	15.1	65	74	70	80	23	13	15	10
Cherokee	61	97	5.9	6.7	25	32	27	58	7	3	2	4
Haywood	54	61	4.7	6.2	21	30	24	25	3	4	6	2
Henderson	159	211	17.0	13.7	48	73	90	101	14	21	7	16
Jackson	—	47	—	4.7	—	23	—	17	—	5	—	2
Macon	101	62	10.3	6.5	46	25	43	25	9	10	3	2
Madison	—	47	—	4.9	—	23	—	20	—	2	—	1
McDowell	190	219	22.1	21.5	71	91	85	89	21	24	13	15
Watauga	39	31	6.8	3.5	23	9	14	20	2	2	0	0
Wilkes	181	232	8.8	9.4	73	94	109	107	29	25	7	6
Yancey	77	55	5.5	3.8	33	10	33	19	9	25	2	1
Total	1,648	1,877	11.6	10.3		715		840		220		102
Percentage of WNC Slaveholders, 1860						38%		44.7%		11.7%		5.4%
Percentage of Southern Slaveholders, 1860						26%		41%		20%		14%

*1850 figures for Ashe County include those for Alleghany as well.
Source: Computed from *Seventh and Eighth U.S. Censuses*, 1850, table 1; 1860, tables 1 and 2.

Table 3.2., Continued

From "*Mountain Masters*", John Inscoe, University of Tennessee press, 1989



— File Photo

As This Photo Of Asheville's Riverfront Shows, Industry Built Up Between The Banks Of The French Broad And The Railroad Tracks

1990 - 1999

Asheville Citizen-Times

■ State, Region/**10A**
■ Capital Notebook/**10A**
■ Flashback/**12A**

Mountains

☐ Buncombe ☐ Madison

Sunday, Feb. 3, 1991

Gospel Quartets Used To Take To The Road To Spread The Word Of Music

BOB TERRELL

The first professional gospel quartet was the James W. Vaughan Quartet of 1910, organized and trained by a Texan named George W. Sebren for the Vaughan Music Co. in Lawrenceburg, Tenn. It consisted of Sebren, Charles W. Vaughan, Ira T. Foust and Joe M. Allen. They were paid by the Vaughan company and traveled around the South, singing at conventions and peddling James W. Vaughan songbooks.

The venture was so successful that in the 1920s there were at one time 16 Vaughan quartets on the road — and an equal number of Stamps quartets selling Stamps-Baxter songbooks. The original Vaughan quartet broke up after a few years, and in the late 1920s George W. Sebren moved to Asheville and opened the George W. Sebren Music Co. on Rankin Avenue.

He sold songbooks, regular books and magazines, and he dealt in used books and magazines. He'd trade with you. Folks had to scratch for a living in those days. Sebren taught a lot of local people to sing in the singing schools he ran in a building across Broadway from the Langren Hotel. The Sebren Quartet, which he formed sometime in the 1930s, always rehearsed in the music store on Rankin.

Riley Smith of Leicester met George Sebren in 1937 at one of the monthly singings in a big room above Liggett's Drug Store on Pack Square. He recalls Sebren as a good-sized man, maybe 6-feet tall, not heavy, blond-haired, well-dressed and a good singer. Sebren heard Riley sing that night and asked him to join the Sebren Quartet, replacing Bill McKinney at baritone.

"Once a month we'd have a singing over Liggett's Drug Store," Riley Smith said the other day. "It was a big room filled with chairs, and usually there would be 50 or so people for the singing. Sometimes we would hold singings in the courtroom of the Buncombe County Courthouse. I've seen the courtroom full of people for these singings.

"Nobody made any money singing. They'd usually take up a love offering for us and sometimes we'd make enough for gas and something to eat. I never thought about making money singing, not even when I promoted singing in the Asheville City Auditorium."

Riley Smith's All-Night Singings in City Auditorium were monthly attractions from 1951 to 1958 that often filled the building and brought the best quartets of the day to town. By then, Sebren was dead and Riley had his own quartet, the Tonemasters.

Things were different at those later singings. Voices were amplified until they filled the building, and the booming bass voices of J.D. Sumner and Big Chief Wetherington rattled the rafters.

When Clyde Williams and Riley Smith were with the Sebren Quartet, they sang a song called "The Walking Song" in which the quartet got down in the audience and walked over the building singing, each man going in a different direction. "As long as we could hear the piano," Riley said, "We sang the song."

The Sebren Quartet became so good and so popular it sang all over the Carolinas, Tennessee and Georgia, usually riding in Sebren's car. He had a Chevrolet during the mid-'30s, but Riley Smith, a car salesman by trade, sold him a new 1938 Nash Lafayette in which the quartet traveled for years.

"Sebren was the world's worst driver," Riley recalled. "It's a wonder he didn't kill us all. He zig-zagged all over the road, and usually drove on the wrong side."

Sebren drove the quartet to Statesville one Sunday morning to sing that afternoon, and on the way down a Highway Patrolman pulled him over for erratic driving.

"Wonder what that feller wants?" Sebren said when he heard the siren.

"Where you fellows from?" the officer asked when Sebren pulled over.

"I'm from Asheville, North Carolina," Sebren said. "This is the Sebren Quartet. We're going to sing in Statesville this afternoon."

"I'll tell you right now," the patrolman said, "you're not going to sing anywhere this afternoon if you keep driving like this. You're going to kill yourself and all of these other men."

Sebren pointed to a gold star on his windshield. "See that gold star? I got that for never having an accident."

"Well, there's a first time for everything, and you're gonna have one down here if you don't shape up," the officer said. "I'm going to let you go, but I want you to drive on the right side of the road. I'm going to follow you and make sure you do."

Later, on a trip to South Carolina, Sebren passed a car, cut in too quick and hooked the other man's front bumper.

"Wonder what in the world he means!" Sebren exclaimed, fighting for control of his car.

"You hit his bumper," one of the singers said.

"Well, he shouldn't'a been over where he was!" Sebren exclaimed.

"It's a wonder any of the quartets survived those early days — but they did," Riley said.

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SECOND ANNUAL FAIR

SEPTEMBER 6-14

HELD AT THE NEW ASHEVILLE SPEEDWAY AMBOY ROAD

DAILY SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

EVERYDAY EVENTS:

Heinz Hitch - (Asheville Citizen-Times)
Blacksmith Shop
Molasses Mill
Apple Butter Making
Chair Bottoming
Quilting
Shingle Making
Basket Weaving
Corn Shuck Crafts
Rug Making
Kraut Making
Leather Tooling
Old Time Music Making
Broom Making
Herb Display
Livestock Exhibits
Family Living Exhibits
Commercial Exhibits
Crafts Sales
Cassette Sales
Barnyard Games
Carnival Midway
WLOS-TV Tethered Balloon Rides

FRIDAY, SEPT. 6 GRAND OPENING

3:00 p.m.	Kick-Off
5:00 p.m.	Donna Halpern
	The Countrymen
	Honey Baked Goods Judging
6:00 p.m.	Crazy-Legs Contest
	Floral Design Demo.
6:30 p.m.	Youth Baked Goods Judging

FRIDAY, SEPT. 6 GRAND OPENING

7:00 p.m.	Thunder Rose Band
	Barnyard Games
	Floral Design Demo.
8:00 p.m.	Bar H Rodeo
9:00 p.m.	Stoney Creek Boys
	Pisgah View Ranch Dancers
10:00 p.m.	Fireworks

SATURDAY, SEPT. 7 WWNC AGRICULTURE DAY

11:00 a.m.	Baby Contest
	Mike Williams
	Bo's Bluegrass
	Casserole Judging
11:30 a.m.	Marshall Hillbilly Cloggers
1:00 p.m.	Barnyard Games
	Floral Design Demo.
2:00 p.m.	Mike Williams
	Laron Huntley
3:00 p.m.	Bar H Rodeo
	Floral Design Demo.
4:00 p.m.	Free Flight Band
5:00 p.m.	Donna Halpern
	Sweet As Can "BEE"
	Floral Design Demo.
6:00 p.m.	"BEE"hind Contest
7:00 p.m.	Laron Huntley Dancers

SUNDAY, SEPT. 8 KISS-FM FAMILY DAY

10:00 a.m.	Dairy Goat Show
1:00 p.m.	Tony Blanton
2:00 p.m.	Shaped Note Singers
	Flag Contest Judging
3:00 p.m.	Foundations Quartet
	Floral Design Demo.
4:00 p.m.	How Sweet It Is Contest
5:00 p.m.	Donna Halpern
	Floral Design Demo.
6:00 p.m.	The Kingsmen
8:00 p.m.	The Kingsmen

MONDAY, SEPT. 9 YOUTH DAY

Grandstand open 1:00-6:00 p.m. for Youth Bands

1:00 p.m.	Tony Blanton
	Corn Shucking Contest
	Bean Stringing Contest
2:00 p.m.	Appalachian Puppet Theatre
3:30 p.m.	Freckles Contest
4:30 p.m.	Where Can She "BEE" Contest
5:30 p.m.	Buzz Off Contest
6:00 p.m.	Barnyard Games
7:00 p.m.	Youth Talent Show
	Floral Design Demo

TUESDAY, SEPT. 10 SENIOR CITIZENS DAY

5:00 p.m.	Tony Blanton
	American Border Collie Demo.
5:30 p.m.	Joyful Noise Singers
6:00 p.m.	Sandwich Building Contest
	Appalachian Puppet Theatre
7:00 p.m.	Baked Goods Judging
	Seniors Hat Contest
	Tuxedo Junction
	Floral Design Demo.
7:30 p.m.	Jitterbug Contest
	Husband & Wife Calling Cont.
	American Border Collie Demo.

WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 11 COMMUNITY DAY

5:00 p.m.	Laura Boosinger
	Barnyard Games
6:00 p.m.	Foundations Quartet
	Fair Princess Pageant
7:00 p.m.	Greased Pig Chase
	Floral Design Demo.
7:30 p.m.	The Countrymen
9:00 p.m.	"BEE"tween Community Clubs winners announced
	Dancers

THURSDAY, SEPT. 12 MILITARY DAY

5:00 p.m.	Laura Boosinger
	Barnyard Games
5:30 p.m.	40 West Band
6:00 p.m.	Sweeter Than Honey Contest
	Fair Queen Pageant
7:00 p.m.	Four Of A Kind
	Floral Design Demo.
9:00 p.m.	Four Of A Kind

FRIDAY, SEPT. 13 DOMINO'S PIZZA LUCKY 13 DAY

5:00 p.m.	Donna Halpern
	Barnyard Games
5:30 p.m.	The Countrymen
6:00 p.m.	Floral Design Demo.
	"BEE" Extraordinary Contest
7:00 p.m.	Chocolate Candy Judging
	Thunder Rose Band
	Floral Design Demo.
9:00 p.m.	Stoney Creek Boys Dancers

SATURDAY, SEPT. 14 COUNTRY MUSIC DAY

10:00 a.m.	Junior Market Lamb Show
	Junior Ewe Show
11:00 a.m.	Mike Williams
	Nightshift Band
	Chili Cook-off
11:30 a.m.	Marshall Hillbilly Cloggers
1:00 p.m.	Fiddling Contest
	Floral Design Demo.
2:00 p.m.	Mike Williams
	McMinn Family Band
3:00 p.m.	Jeanne Nabers
	Floral Design Demo.
5:00 p.m.	Floral Design Demo.
5:30 p.m.	Jeanne Nabers
7:00 p.m.	Free Flight Band
	Floral Design Demo.
8:00 p.m.	Clogging & Buck Dancing Cont.
10:00 p.m.	Grand Finale Fireworks

ADVANCE TICKETS	$3.00
GATE TICKETS	$4.00
SENIOR CITIZEN TICKETS	$3.00
SEASON TICKETS	$25.00
CHILDREN 12 & UNDER	FREE

Advance Tickets may be purchased at the following locations:
BILTMORE SQUARE
BB&T
FIRST CITIZENS BANK
FIRST COMMERCIAL BANK
FIRST UNION NATIONAL BANK

West Asheville remembers its past

...in a new oral history project

By Susan Gambrell
STAFF WRITER

West Asheville residents, filled with pride and a deep love of community, have spent years defending their turf.

And many of them came together recently for a unique gathering in the basement of the West Asheville branch library on a chilly, rainy autumn night to talk about their home.

It was a storytelling event to learn more about a community that years ago was its own town, even had its own mayor.

And it was a time for funny as well as serious recollections, a time when West Asheville neighbors could joke openly about a place that non-natives in the past have called "Worst Asheville" and "The Working Man's Home."

West Asheville is in fact, testified some of the old-timers who have made generous livings in the community, a burgeoning area, with its main business section along Haywood Road presently enjoying a 99 percent occupancy rate.

Luke Atkinson, who opened his first furniture store on Haywood Road more than 40 years ago, revealed the secret to West Asheville's success.

The variety of businesses, including gas stations, a pharmacy, clothing stores, craft and flower shops, restaurants, grocery and convenience stores, are the key, Atkinson said.

"We have customers who are local and those from all over," Atkinson said. "I think Asheville is the suburb of West Asheville."

Rob Neufeld, adult services coordinator for the Asheville-Buncombe Library system, helped bring the group together.

Neufeld noticed months ago that all of the major archives in the area were empty of information concerning this community — a community that has a rich heritage, including eccentric characters and an unusual story of survival during the Great Depression.

Neufeld has helped start what he calls the West Asheville Oral History project and has been working with Warren Wilson College, UNCA, and the West Asheville Business Association to collect information

See **History** *on page* **5**

History

Continued from page **1**

about the area.

Neufeld, with microphone in hand, tape recorder whirling, weaved through the crowd, asking for stories about the people and places of their community.

"Tonight," he said, "We're going to have a good old time in an old fashioned way by telling stories."

The first character to emerge from West Asheville's past this evening was Charles B. Anderson, also known locally as Dynamite Anderson. Anderson was the first principal of Vance School and had a reputation for being an idealist.

"During the Depression," said photographer Allan Culbertson, "we didn't have a lot of food around. Anderson asked us if we wanted to go to Beaverdam, in north Asheville, to pick apples...They were the best tasting apples I ever ate."

Anderson, his daughter Nancy said, was the kind of man who'd work an entire summer, teaching, and never get paid.

PACKED AISLES

LARRY HOFFMAN/CITIZEN-TIMES

The new Ingles, opened on Haywood Road in West Asheville, was mobbed with shoppers on its first day Sunday. The 32,000-square-foot store employs 75 people, company spokesman V.C. Fisher said. The store at the corner of Haywood Road and Louisiana Avenue replaces the much smaller store on the corner of Haywood Road and Patton Avenue.

Asheville Citizen November 18, 1991

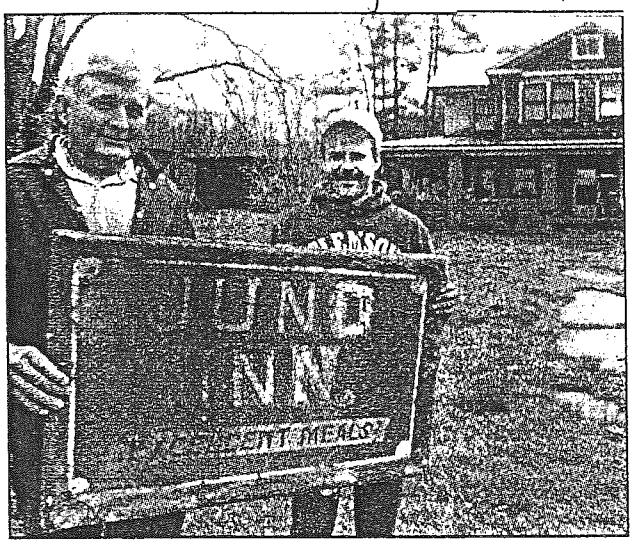
A place called Juno

By Susan G. Reinhardt
STAFF WRITER

WED APR 14 1993

West Neigh. APRIL 14, 1993

This is the first of an ongoing series highlighting west Buncombe County communities, either thriving or ghost towns. The series is a result of a project, "Reaching Out to the Communities of West Buncombe," the Asheville-Buncombe Library is doing in celebration of the West Asheville branch's 40th anniversary June 5. If you know of a community of special historical interest or significance, please contact West Neighbors or the library.



EWART BALL/CITIZEN-TIMES

Frank Cook, left, and Charles Rutledge, dig up an old, rusted sign that once welcomed visitors and travelers to the Juno Inn, now abandoned, but still standing at the crossroads of Old Leicester Highway and Bear Creek Road. The Juno community was once a thriving trading post town but has faded with progress, a new highway and subdivisions.

In Frank Cook's day, Juno was a thriving crossroads with its own post office, two blacksmith shops, a couple of dry goods stores and an inn where people could spend the night and wake up to the rich smells of fresh coffee and homemade breads.

Juno, a community located in the rolling hills and farmland between Asheville and Leicester, was a popular trading post – a place where one could buy groceries, a pair of shoes, or spend the day chatting with neighbors.

It was also a place Billy the Kid's gang tore through one afternoon, wild and shooting guns, said Charles Rutledge who moved to Juno with his family when he was 7 years old. Someone told him that story and he doesn't doubt it as fact.

That was Juno then, before a blacktop road and subdivisions shadowed – then swallowed – the small township, a place old-timers remember fondly as home and are quick to say is "still on the county map." It's center is at the crossroads of Bear Creek and Old Leicester roads.

Juno was the hub of the community before the Leicester Highway was built in 1953, said Cook, whose late aunt, Polly Young, ran the former Juno Inn, an old house still standing in the village, its roof painted school-bus yellow.

After the old post office/general store was purposely burned in the early '70s, when townspeople considered it a hazard and an eyesore, Juno withered up and died. There was nothing left. No stores. No inn. No checker games on rainy days around a table in the general store.

For 20 years, Juno resident Patricia Rutledge said, there wasn't a single business in the hamlet. Just a couple dozen houses and a bright green street sign named after the community.

Then along came Charles Rutledge, Patricia's 28-year-old son with a keen interest in history and a strong desire to revive the community. For years he collected relics from the town: a rusted sign that used to swing in front of the Juno Inn, a set of scales once used for weighing flour and meal at the general store, and old ledgers and receipts dating as far back as 1847.

Rutledge also opened last August the town's first business in more than 20 years – the Juno Tire and Service Center on the Old Leicester Highway, smack in the heart of the community.

Inside, eventually, he plans to display the memorabilia from Juno's heyday. He's hoping the town will gather, reminisce, and one day others will also decide to open businesses here.

"I'd like for people to know at least what it was," Rutledge said. "I would have loved to have been here when it was more of a township, a trading center. None of it will probably be brought back, but I would like for people to know it was here."

❖ *See* **Juno** *on page* **5**

"West Neighbors",
Asheville Citizen
April 14, 1993

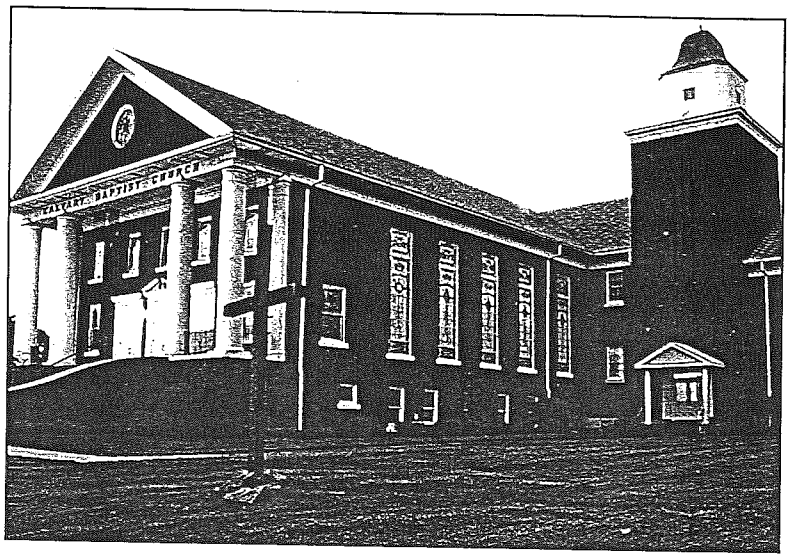
HISTORY

Calvary Baptist Church was organized on January 3, 1909, in the old Odd Fellows Hall, which stood on the corner of Hanover Street and Haywood Road. There were 68 charter members. Dr. A. E. Brown was moderator, and J. B. Grice acted as clerk. Rev. R. P. Walker was called to be the first pastor.

The first church building was built on the west side of Hanover Street in the block between Haywood Road and Pennsylvania Avenue. On the first Sunday in July, 1909, services were held in the unfinished sanctuary. During the 14 years this building was used, the following served as pastors: R. P. Walker, R. D. Cross, Dr. M. M. Wamboldt, John Bomar, Millard Jenkins, H. B. Killiam, J. J. Gentry and J. B. Grice.

In 1916 the lot at the present location was purchased. Due to World War I, work on the new building did not begin until December 1921. The building was first used on May 13, 1923, and the auditorium was completed in 1925. Each Sunday during the building program, a special collection was taken in an old iron pot. Money was raised through pledges, and later through the sale of bonds. The memorial windows in the auditorium and the large outside columns were given by members and families. The smaller memorial windows in the building were donated by Sunday School classes and Training Union groups The pipe organ was purchased in 1926 with the contributions of individuals.

On March 6, 1908, the Women's Missionary Society was organized. A Baptist Young People's Union and Boy Scout Troop 2 were founded in 1909. The Royal Ambassadors, Young Women's Auxiliary, Vacation Bible School



and an orchestra were added during the years from 1921 to 1926.

Several "firsts" have taken place at Calvary. The first Vacation Bible School in Asheville was formed at Calvary in 1924, as was the first Brotherhood organization in the state in 1934. The first graded choir program in the state, and perhaps the Southeast, was organized at Calvary in 1934 under the direction of Mrs. Blanche Starnes. In 1958, Calvary was one of the first churches to use the Forward Program of Finance. Rev. J. B. Grice served as pastor for the 27 years from 1918 to 1945. The church's debt was paid in 1943, and a ceremony during which the note was burned was held on Mr. Grice's 25th anniversary.

Calvary has improved and expanded its facilities over the years. A building on Baker Avenue was purchased in 1938 and converted into Sunday School rooms and later into a youth outreach center. The educational building was completed on May 30, 1954, at a total cost of $300,000.

In recent years, an Allen digital organ and furnishings for the vestibule have been purchased, and the Peggy Compton Anteroom to the church offices was remodeled using memorial gifts.

During times of plenty and trouble, Calvary has remained open, closing only once - during the influenza epidemic after World War I, when all the churches in Asheville were closed for eight weeks. The Odd Fellows Hall is gone, demolished for the construction of I-240 in the 1960s, as is the Hanover Street church building. The streetcar line, which was the primary means of transportation in Asheville, is gone, and the current building has been expanded and improved in ways which would have pleased the original 122 members of the church.

Yet the life of the church remains vital and strong. Members, now totaling over 1,200, still visit the sick and infirm, donate their money to worthy charitable and missionary activities, and the Word of God is still read, studied and cherished in the same manner as almost 90 years ago, when the first services of Calvary Baptist Church were held.

Updated by Peggy West, 1993.

'Westfest' planners expect event to draw thousands to streets

WED OCT 27 1993

West neigh.

By Susan G. Reinhardt
STAFF WRITER

Last year Bill Cook wasn't sure what to expect. He was new as director of the West Asheville Community Center and it was his first "Westfest," the annual fall festival held in a large parking lot on Haywood Road.

For one thing, he was overwhelmed by the turnout. Thousands had decided to head to the parking lot of Grace Baptist Church and First Union Bank where there were crafts, entertainment, food, games, magic and special events.

"I was running to Ingles buying hotdogs, buns...I had no idea there'd be so many people," Cook said, estimating between 2,000 and 2,500 enjoyed last year's festivities. "I feel better this year. I have a little bit more of an idea of what's going on."

And plenty of activity is planned for Westfest '93 from 10 a.m. until 3 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 30. A wide variety of crafts will be the focal point of the festival, including paper, brooms, jewelry painting, crochet, weaving, beads and Christmas items. Also this year, several public service booths will be on site.

Halloween activities, always a favorite, begin at 2 p.m. with a costume judging and coloring contest.

Children accompanied by an adult are invited to stroll down Haywood Road, stopping in the businesses for safe trick-or-treating.

And again this year, magician Bill Grimsley will serve as master of ceremonies and perform his magic shows throughout the day.

"This one is a community, family-fun fall festival."

BILL COOK
COMMUNITY CENTER DIRECTOR

The large Star Walk will be inflated and pony rides will be available.

"Last year we had llamas," Cook said. Westfest, sponsored by Asheville Parks and Recreation Department and the West Asheville Business Association, is billed as a true family festival, kicked off every year with a 10 a.m. parade beginning at St. Joan of Arc parking lot.

Known as a mini-Bele Chere, a scaled-down version of WNC's most popular festival, Westfest promises some great entertainment and events, minus the sticky summer weather and beer trucks.

"This one is a community, family-fun fall festival," Cook said. And everything is free but the concessions – standard carnival fare such as hotdogs, pizza, popcorn and candy apples.

Cook said people liked the fact everything was free.

"Some people were saying, 'Gee, most of these things we have to pull out $5 bucks, $2 bucks.' It was nice they

❖ *See* **Westfest** *on page* **3**

Merchants donate office space for police substation

SAT APR 2 1994

(Org) C-T FROM STAFF REPORTS

A business group's donation of office space may mean a permanent police presence in West Asheville.

The 157 merchants of the West Asheville Business Association are planning to donate 1,200 square feet of office space on Haywood Road to the city, which in turn will station Asheville police officers.

Tommy Sellers

The business group will finalize its plans at a board meeting next Thursday, said Tommy Sellers, president of the association.

The proposed West Asheville police substation will cost the city nothing, with the association paying for the rent, utilities and furnishings, Sellers said.

Sellers said the substation would increase police presence in the area and deter crime.

It would also be a convenience to West Asheville beat officers, who would not have to drive back and forth to the downtown police station to do paperwork, he said. In addition to the beat officers, a detective and some police volunteers may be stationed at the office, said Capt. Ted Lambert.

Eventually, workers from other city departments may work out of the office, giving West Asheville residents a mini city hall, according to Lambert.

The West Asheville substation may open for business around June 1.

Asheville Citizen April 2, 1994

WEST FEST

West Neigh LARRY HOFFMAN/CITIZEN-TIMES

PHOTO COURTESY OF KAY MURRAY

More than 2,000 people came out for West Fest, a "downtown" celebration held Oct. 31 along Haywood Road, said Bill Cook, city recreation center director. There were craft shows, a magic show and pony and llama rides, he said. Events included a parade, and Brownie Girl Scout Troop No. 351 (pictured left) of Leicester Elementary School participated. Pictured are 18 of the 22 Brownies in Troop No. 351. Back row, left to right: Amy Cipar, Jessica Flynn, Jenna West, Echo Kendall, Evan McElreath, Christy Worley, Cara Angel, Kelli Frisbee, Courtney Frisbee and Darcy Kuhn. Front row, left to right, Christie Sherlin, Sheena Murray, Vicky Morgan, Laura Sherlin, Samantha Buckner, Brittany Ward, Amber Wallen and Jennifer Rogers.

ASHEVILLE
CITIZEN-TIMES

Dedicated to the Upbuilding of Western North Carolina
1870-1994

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MULTIMEDIA, INC.

EDITORIAL

WABA helps itself and community

C-T

SAT APR 16 1994

West Asheville residents have reason to be proud of their community's business leaders.

Thanks to the leadership of the West Asheville Business Association, the Asheville Police Department will soon have a substation on Haywood Road – a development that will further the department's goal of getting officers more involved in the communities they patrol.

The WABA will pay the rent on the 1,200-square-foot substation, with a realty company paying for the utilities and residents donating furniture. In addition to serving as a headquarters for officers assigned to West Asheville, the substation – which Police Chief Will Annarino calls a "resource center" – could also be used by other city departments, such as Public Works. In time, the station could become a mini city hall.

"It's taking city government back into the streets and neighborhoods," Annarino said.

That's almost certain to have positive effects. The increased police presence will deter crime, for one thing. And a neighborhood substation will help dispel the image of a centralized, downtown city government isolated from the people it serves.

The WABA is investing in its own interests, of course, with an eye toward reducing thefts, burglaries and other crimes. But it's helping the entire community, too. The heightened police presence will be felt in residential areas as well as the business district.

One of the nicest things about the plan is that it will benefit the city without costing city taxpayers a cent. In fact, because officers won't have to make so many trips to police headquarters to do their paperwork, it might even save money.

POLICE SUBSTATION OPENS

THU JUN 2 1994 C-T

DEBBIE CHASE-JENNINGS/CITIZEN-TIMES

Police officers gather to hear U.S. Rep. Charles Taylor Wednesday during grand opening ceremonies of an Asheville Police Department substation in West Asheville. The Haywood Road office space was given to the department by the West Asheville Business Association. The business group will also pay for the office's rent, utilities and furnishings.

LITTLE LEAGUE WINNERS

PHOTO COURTESY OF LYNN ALLEN

Luke Atkinson Marlins placed first in the West Asheville Little League 2A Division. Team Members are, left to right: (front row) Drew Shook, Ryan Chase, Daniel Allen, Nathan Troutman, Andrew Roberts; (second row) Josh Baker, Cody Dodge, Ryan Ellege, Bonita Jackson; (third row) Ashley Reed, Jonathan Atkinson, John Reed, Jerrell Jackson; (back row) Ricky Roberts, David Dodge, Coach Bobby Troutman, Richard Allen, Calvin Shook, Pete Chase. Not pictured: Amanda Ellison.

2/15/95

Historical marker honors author

Many considered Olive Tilford Dargan 'the best portraitist of the Southern Appalachian people'

By Susan G. Reinhardt
STAFF WRITER

In 1925, a tiny, curly-haired woman less than 5 feet tall moved into a log house in West Asheville, on wooded farmland, that is now the site of a shopping area surrounding the post office on Patton Avenue.

Olive Tilford Dargan was born on a farm in Kentucky and blessed with an eager mind and intelligence. Widowed and middle-aged, she moved into the cabin, lugged her typewriter to a room upstairs, set it by a window from which she spent more than 40 years viewing the mountains, absorbing inspiration for her novels, volumes of poetry, short story collections and plays.

Hers was a legacy of work honored by many, a treasury of words that strived to find a voice for the oppressed, the working class, and make sense of a world that to Dargan often seemed senseless, misguided.

What Dargan left Asheville, and the rest of the world, was her heart, bound in the leather and paper that wrapped her

❖ *See* **Author** *on page* **5**

FILE PHOTO

Olive Tilford Dargan in a photo taken in 1946.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

WHO: Olive Tilford Dargan, well-known author who spent more than 40 years living in West Asheville, in a log home once owned by the son of former President Rutherford B. Hayes.

WHAT: Will be honored this spring with an historical marker to be placed near the site of her home at Haywood Road and Balsam Avenue.

BACKGROUND: Born in 1869 in Litchfield, Ky., daughter of school teachers. She attended Peabody College in Nashville, Tenn. She discovered Western North Carolina during a camping trip and said as a child she would one day live in the mountains.

Dargan entered Radcliffe College at 24 and studied economics and politics. There she met Louis Pegram Dargan, a Harvard senior from Darlington, S.C. and the man she married in 1898. He drowned in 1915 on a voyage to Cuba and Dargan sought refuge in the mountains, first living on a farm near Bryson City, then moving to the cabin in West Asheville.

❖ *Continued from page* **1**

words, her soul.

Dargan, the daughter of school teachers and a precocious child who at 14 took charge of an entire school teaching students from age 6 to 20, found peace and inspiration in the log cabin at 58 Balsam Avenue. It was located on an estate once owned by Rutherford Platt Hayes, son of former President Rutherford B. Hayes, who had maintained the home for an aunt.

And though the cabin has long been gone, the land now home to commercial development on the fringe of Patton Avenue, Dargan will soon be immortalized in her old neighborhood.

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE: Catherine Morris, who lives in the Falconhurst community, (name of Hayes' former estate), has been working to unearth some of West Asheville's most historical and notable people. She was notified last month that an historical marker in honor of the beloved poet and writer would be erected this spring.

"You should have seen me jumping up and down," said Morris, upon hearing the the news from the North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources. To qualify for a marker, Morris said, isn't easy. The subject must be considered of statewide importance, not just for local or regional accomplishments.

According to Rob Neufeld, local historian, Dargan is of national and world-wide significance, considered by many the best portraitist of the Southern Appalachian people.

"She combines a very honest, interesting-type view of people with true poetry," he said, "and she had a real sympathy for the oppressed people. It was a very unusual combination."

Dargan was deeply concerned with social problems, the ramifications of big business, mergers and the effects on the employer and employees. Her most significant novel, "Call Home the Heart," dealt with a mountain family whose venturesome daughter left the hills to go into the industrial world. The focus of the book was upon the mill strike in Gastonia, and not only was it the recipient of the Maxim Gorky award in 1932, but also a means to forward Dargan's beliefs.

It was followed by "A Stone Came Rolling," considered by many a novel of even greater merit, and "Sons of a Stranger (1947), which focused on men and women and mining in the early 1900s.

In this area, Dargan is perhaps best known by "Highland Annals," an account of the Southern mountaineers, published in 1925, a collection of sketches of the life in the Nantahala Mountains. The critics praised the work and Dargan received an honorary Doctor of Literature degree from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

During her life she received the Thomas Wolfe, Roanoke-Chowan and Oscar Arnold Young awards. In 1959, Dargan was honored as one of the nation's greatest poets by the Poetry Society in New York City.

Yet despite her distinguished and celebrated mind, Olive Dargan was a woman who dodged the limelight, preferring instead the attention be focused on the people about whom she wrote.

INSPIRATION: Gazing at the purple mountains, the setting beyond her window filled with blooms and trees, flowering shrubs and boxwoods, Dargan wrote about a society she saw as unjust. She was a modest woman who declined for years being noted in "Who's Who in America." Finally she gave in.

"If I have done anything of record," she said in the 1930s, "time will take care of it after I am dead, and if I haven't, time will take care of that too."

She preferred not hobnobbing with other literary greats, but instead using her genius to become a literary artist, hoping her works would be widely read so that those who entered her poetry and prose would discover the horrors, the crimes, the injustices and the shame in some human conditions.

This is what drove Dargan, who at 12 asked her father, "What's wrong with the world?"

Her desire was to bring awareness through works she left behind.

And now, after her death in 1968 at the age of 99, Dargan is being remembered again.

"This has excited the local historians," Neufeld said. "All of a sudden a tremendous aspect of local history was revealed, unburied."

Asheville Citizen February 15, 1995

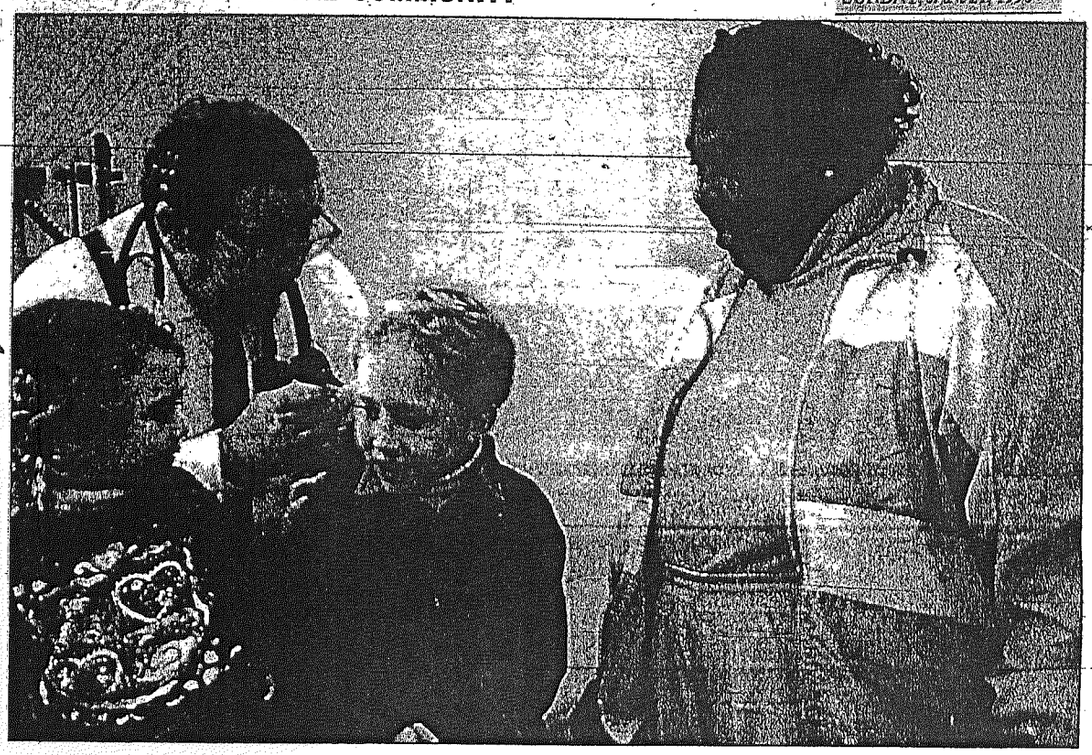
9-6-95

PHOTO COURTESY OF EARL C

Members of the 1973 West Asheville All-Stars, from left to right, bottom row, Scotty Martin, Danny Crowe, Mike Hembree, John Hooker, Ricky Robinson; middle row, Norman Byrd, Bobby Thomas, Doug Cowan, Mike Cobb, Cal Ripken Jr., Mike Bailey; top row, Ricky Moore, Mark Broome, manager Earl Cobb, coach Rodney Duckett, Ken Johnson.

FILLING A NEED IN THE COMMUNITY

SUNDAY, JAN. 21, 1996



DEBBIE CHASE-JENNINGS/CITIZEN-TIMES

Hannah Plemmons, 3, comforts big brother Justin as Patrick Kelsey, a physician's assistant, examines the child. Minnie Jones, right, has been the force behind establishing the clinic, which provides routine medical care to families in her low-income neighborhood.

Jones puts up fight for health of indigent

When a fire is set in Minnie's soul, the entire forest could burn.

You don't say no to Minnie Jones.

You don't walk up to this former civil rights activist who marched across the country with a mission, a woman who pulls for the poor like a preacher summons sinners, and say "Ms. Jones, this can't possibly be done."

If you do, expect the flames.

Minnie will frown and fold her arms. She'll stand with feet planted, eyes narrowed to hyphens. Then she'll take a deep breath, collect her thoughts and bombard the naysayers with a list of reasons why her ideas WILL work.

She will hand out the red business cards stating her mission: "N.C. Community Advocate for Low-income People," and smile before walking off, having made her point.

College educated and retired from food service and manufacturing jobs, her latest volunteer venture is a community and residential-based health clinic, the primary care so many poor people lack.

Susan Reinhardt

When she heard talk that WNC Community Health Services was considering such clinics in low-income neighborhoods, she thought of her own, Pisgah View Apartments in West Asheville.

It was her job in 1962 as an Opportunity Corporation volunteer to integrate the predominately white neighborhood, a job she completed successfully.

Now there are new missions, such as good health care, on her agenda. If anybody needs a dose of decent care it's her people, the tenants over which she tends as president, she said.

Minnie, a Spartanburg, S.C., native, said Pisgah View is at capacity. Its races are balanced – 262 units with 668 tenants from black to white to elderly to small children.

All with at least one thing in common. Little or no money.

"Nobody seems to want to help the poor people," she said, standing in the waiting room of the small clinic that bears her name. The room is clean, newly renovated in teal and mauve. Pamphlets are scattered across tables. Patients sit with hands clasped, waiting to see an expert, waiting for the medicines that give

❖ *See* **Jones** *on page* **13A**

Jones

❖ *Continued from page* **9A**

them relief. Or life.

Minnie talked of similar clinics set up in residential sections all over the country, especially in big cities like Chicago.

"I saw the need," she said. "It's done in other places so why not in the South?"

She talked about an incident that fixed her mind solid on providing her neighbors decent doctoring.

"I had a client with a temperature of 104. We tried various health providers and were told she couldn't get an appointment until the next day. In the meantime, I took her to the emergency room."

CURB SERVICE: It's not that free health care isn't out there. The big problem, she and others in the business agree, is transportation. If people are poor and in bad health, a Cadillac doesn't await them curbside to whisk them toward treatment.

"People who are indigent, truly indigent, don't have cars," said Pat Kelsey, one of two rotating physician's assistants from Hygeia Family Medicine in West Asheville. "Even though health care is sitting there waiting for them, they can't get to it."

So Minnie Jones decided her own neighborhood was the perfect place to start the clinic that opened last September. Scott Pearson, president of the board of directors for WNC Community Health Services, a non-profit, is pleased with the site.

"It's a concept we felt was an important way to bring needed primary care to the underserved, indigent population," Pearson said. "It's difficult for these folks to access our regular health care system."

And some may not try at all.

Minnie and the clinic caretakers are convinced an elderly man living at Pisgah View wouldn't be alive today had it not been for the short walk he took for help.

The day before the man had grabbed his chest and collapsed. Somehow, he made it through the night, lying frightened in his bed, until the next day when the Minnie Jones Health Care Center opened its doors shortly after lunch.

He stumbled across the yard, through the parking lot, fist against heart, until he reached the clinic, located in the community center.

"He had a major heart attack," Minnie said and a doctor confirmed. "If we hadn't been here he'd of probably stayed home and died."

Once a patient arrives at the clinic, which is funded through grants and donations, a registered nurse, physician's assistant, or a doctor checks them out. The patient is either treated and sent home – with advice and medication – or referred somewhere else.

Usually Minnie or office help will call a cab to transport. Often, she's loaded patients in her own car and driven them to hospitals and specialists.

One of these days she'd like her own van for the clinic. And few people doubt she'll get it.

LIFE'S LITTLE BASICS: The Minnie Jones center is no plush and carpeted office offering fancy testing and New Yorker magazines. It is not the place to go for CAT scans and X-rays, ultrasounds and minor surgery.

Instead, it is a place for primary care, where anyone who qualifies can find the basics: remedies for flu and colds, medicines for heart and lung disease and diabetes. A friendly face to hear their tales of pain and sickness.

"It's quicker and cheaper," Pat Kelsey said, "than using the local emergency room as primary care provider."

Minnie Jones and others who are associated with the clinic, believe in its benefits.

"I think we're doing some good things," Kelsey said. "If nothing else, people are finding out there are people around here who give a damn."

And if it weren't for Minnie, he said, who came here as a teen-ager, raised a daughter and several foster kids, the center wouldn't be at Pisgah View.

"Minnie Jones is ... pushy," Kelsey said, careful with his words. "But by God she gets things done. She's the catalyst, screaming we need help and care and deserve better than we're getting. She'd tell that to anybody who listened."

Asheville Citizen January 21, 1996

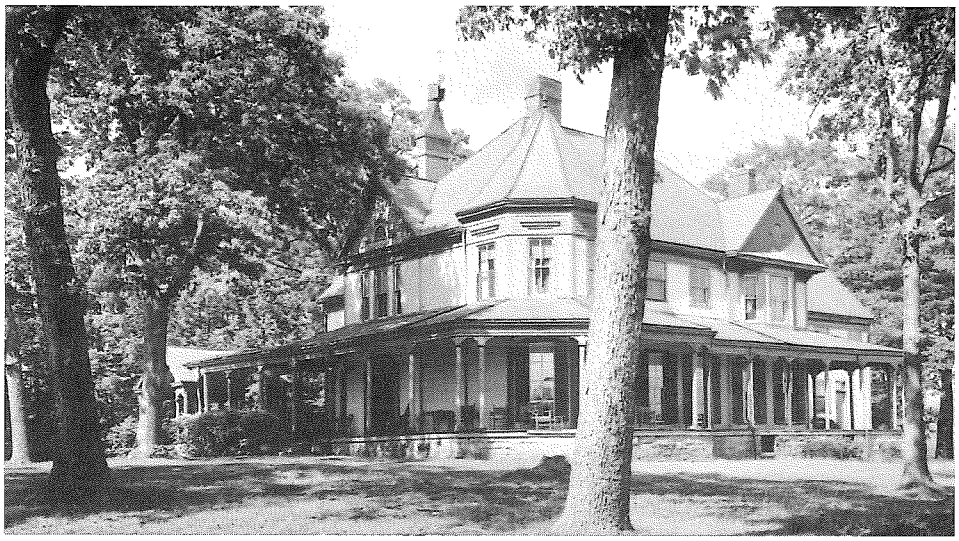
Richmond Hill Inn

Asheville, North Carolina

SPECIAL EDITION HISTORY NEWSLETTER

Early Years at the Mansion

The grand Victorian mansion known as Richmond Hill was built in 1889 as the private residence of Richmond Pearson, a former congressman and ambassador who was renowned for his political and diplomatic service to our nation. The impressive Queen Anne–style house was designed by James G. Hill, the supervising architect for the United States Treasury buildings during that period.



Richmond Hill in the early 1900's

Richmond Hill was one of the most elegant and innovative residential structures of its era with running water, its own communication system, and a pulley-operated elevator for transporting baggage from one floor to the next. The mansion had a grand entrance hall paneled in rich native oak and ten master fireplaces with neoclassical revival mantels.

Despite a half hour's carriage ride from Asheville, the estate was a center of social and political activity for many years. The house could accommodate many people at large social gatherings, as guests could circulate easily within the spacious rooms.

On the Fourth of July, 1890, Richmond and Gabrielle Pearson hosted a grand celebration on the grounds at Richmond Hill. They invited the whole city of Asheville in an open letter stating "it will be entirely a go-as-you-please affair, free and open to all comers." The spectacular affair attracted over 5,000 of Asheville's citizens, nearly one-third of the city's population.

During these years, the estate was almost totally self-supporting. The large, rambling house was surrounded by rolling grounds with gardens, a greenhouse, vineyards, orchards, an ice and wood house, and dairy and pasture lands. On the grounds, visitors could stroll to the hill's highest point where a gazebo or summerhouse stood. There a 40-foot-high platform offered a spectacular view of the river valley below. Richmond Hill was indeed an appropriate setting for the gracious life of an illustrious North Carolina family.

Over 5,000 Asheville citizens celebrated the Fourth of July at Richmond Hill in 1890.

Richmond Pearson: Public-Spirited Citizen

Richmond Pearson in the 1880's

Early Years

Richmond Hill was built as the private residence of Richmond Pearson. Pearson was a man whose personal charm, scholarly accomplishments, and sense of fairness combined to create a statesman and diplomat of uncommon ability. He carried on his family's tradition of distinguished service by becoming one of North Carolina's foremost citizens.

Richmond Pearson was born on January 26, 1852, in Yadkin County, North Carolina, to Richmond Mumford Pearson and his wife Margaret. He was educated at Horner's school in Oxford, North Carolina, and later at Princeton, where he was valedictorian of the class of 1872. After studying law with his father from 1872–1874, Pearson was admitted to the North Carolina Bar. In 1875, he returned to Princeton where he received his master of arts degree and delivered the master's oration.

Diplomat and Statesman

Richmond Pearson was articulate and accomplished–even at a young age. He was a devoted reader of classic literature and was fluent in four languages, including French, German, and Italian. He has been described as a tall, attractive man with a commanding presence. When he was only 23 years old, President Grant appointed Pearson United States Consul in Belgium. After three years in his post, he returned to private law practice for a period of eight years. In 1882 he married the beautiful Gabrielle Thomas of Richmond, Virginia, thus joining two of the oldest families of North Carolina and Virginia.

In 1885 Pearson's career turned towards politics when he was elected to the North Carolina Legislature in which he would serve two terms. By this time, Pearson was well-known as a superb debater, a skill which he used often. He frequently spoke aggressively against his opponents in debate, but was reported to always be honest and fair with his foes.

Richmond Pearson's debates with the Honorable W. T. Crawford of Waynesville, North Carolina, were especially popular. The two men were running for representative from North Carolina's Ninth Congressional District. People would travel for miles by horseback or wagon to hear these men's orations. Although the contests sometimes became fierce, Pearson and Crawford traveled as friends, often staying at the same hotels and maintaining a cordial attitude towards each other.

After a brief return to private law practice, Pearson was elected to the United States Congress in 1895 by the largest majority ever given a Republican in the Ninth District. This election was the beginning of nearly 15 years of Richmond Pearson's uninterrupted public service to our nation.

During his years in Congress, Pearson was admired for his fairness and attention to duty. He was a leader of the North Carolina Republican Party and an adviser to national Republican Party leaders as well. It is said that both Presidents McKinley and Roosevelt considered him to be one of the ablest men in the Republican Party.

Richmond Pearson developed a personal friendship with Theodore Roosevelt during these years. When Roosevelt became president in 1901, he persuaded his friend to reenter diplomatic service, a career for which he was particularly well-suited. Subsequently, Pearson served as United States Consul in Genoa, Italy (1901–1902); Minister to Persia (1902–1907); and Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to Greece and Montenegro (1907–1909). When Roosevelt left the White House, Pearson retired from public life and returned to Richmond Hill.

International Chess Match

In 1897 Pearson attracted international attention as an organizer and team member for a famous chess match. This match was played by transatlantic cable by a team from the United States Congress and the British House of Commons. The contest attracted much interest and excitement from the people and the presses of both countries because telegraphic communication between the continents was still a recent innovation in the 1890s.

The international chess match was designed to interest congressmen in ways to speed and cheapen transat-

lantic communications. It lasted for seven days and ended in a draw with each side winning 2 1/2 games. At the end of the match, Pearson spoke for the American side as he shouted, "Three cheers for her majesty the Queen." The British answer was a rousing, "Three cheers for the president of the United States."

As a memento, the cable company gave each player a trophy in the form of a metal "castle" that enclosed a piece of the cable over which the match was played. Pearson's trophy was proudly displayed for many years at Richmond Hill.

At Home at Richmond Hill

Richmond Pearson built Richmond Hill in 1889 on a hill overlooking the French Broad River. The estate soon became a showcase for Richmond Pearson's collections. From journeys all over the world he brought back rare pieces of art, furnishings, embroideries, and Oriental rugs to display at Richmond Hill. An avid reader, he also accumulated some 3,000 books in the man-sion's library. Many of these books were handed down from his father's collection, and many others were willed to him by his aunt, Sarah Pearson Croom, and her husband, Isaac Croom.

Richmond Hill also reflected Pearson's deep feelings for his family, his friends, and the influential people he had met on his travels. In the library, he displayed many documents that were related to his family and career. There were two pictures of President and Mrs. Theodore Roosevelt that had been inscribed to Gabrielle Pearson in 1908, signed photographs of kings and queens, and framed announcements of commissions to which he had been appointed. In the Drawing Room, a small French jewel table with a painted top housed a pink, satin-lined box that was given to Pearson by the Shah of Iran. The box was decorated with rose-cut diamonds and a photograph of the Shah's father.

Richmond Pearson's room was located on the south end of the house, next to his wife's. His bedroom was typically furnished for a man of that era–with a shaving stand, rolltop desk, and a picture of his mother. But the room also held some very unusual items, like an Egyptian sword, a Greek marble head that had been unearthed at an old Greek colony called Paestrum, and a Persian stick that dervishes carried. Unfortunately, these treasures are no longer at Richmond Hill because they were sold at an auction or inherited by relatives.

Records show that Richmond Pearson had a marvelous personality and was a fascinating conversationalist. According to his niece, Mary Howe, Pearson was a "cultivated, well-read and well-educated gentleman who was handsome, agreeable, and humorous but with a quick fiery temper, which came as it went like lightning." Like some of his quick-tempered ancestors, he is said to have issued two "challenges" but was refused satisfaction in both cases.

Public Servant

Richmond Pearson was a public-spirited man who was especially interested in improvements for the city of Asheville. Many road and street projects came about because of his untiring efforts.

He spearheaded the building of a cast-iron and plank bridge across the French Broad River, but it was later washed away in the flood of 1916. He was also responsible for laying out the road from Richmond Hill to the town of Asheville, which he called Pearson Drive. During an 1890 Fourth of July celebration at Richmond Hill, he hired 1,000 men to build one mile of road in one hour. This road, on the west bank of the French Broad River, was called Lake Shore Avenue.

Richmond Pearson in 1900

Pearson was also instrumental in establishing the Asheville public schools. In 1887, when the city held its first election on establishing a tax for public schools, he worked all day to get people to the polls to vote. Late in the afternoon he heard that an old man who favored schools was working on a farm in the country. Pearson drove to the farm in his buggy and brought the man to the polls just before they closed. The public school proposal won by one vote.

In 1923 Richmond Pearson died at age 71 at his beloved Richmond Hill. He was a well-respected citizen of his community, state, and nation who made an outstanding contribution to our country's legal, political, and diplomatic well-being.

Gabrielle Pearson: The Gracious Hostess

Gabrielle Pearson's portrait was painted in Paris in 1888, when she was 30 years old.

Early Years

Gabrielle Thomas Pearson was born on September 7, 1858. The strawberry blonde, blue-eyed "Gay" was the youngest daughter of Mary Wortham Thomas and James Thomas, Jr., of Richmond, Virginia.

Gay's father was a wealthy Southern tobacco merchant and noted philanthropist. He was one of the few Southerners who retained a pre–Civil War fortune by keeping his funds in English banks. In 1867 he became one of several Southerners to join Horace Greely, Cornelius Vanderbilt, and some 18 Northerners in signing the $100,000 bail bond that released captured Confederate President Jefferson Davis. The Richmond Hill Library once held the official amnesty papers issued to Gay's father, after the war, by President Andrew Johnson.

Family Life

Gabrielle Thomas and Richmond Pearson were married on March 30, 1882. At the time of her wedding, Gabrielle was described by *The Richmond Times-Dispatch* as one of the city's most popular belles. Gay and her five sisters were well-known for their uncommon beauty.

For Pearson, it proved to be a fortunate match. Gay's warm personality made her an excellent wife and mother, and her intelligence and encouragement aided him in his career. She was a gracious hostess at Richmond Hill and at diplomatic posts around the world.

The Pearsons were a sentimental, close-knit family. Gay illustrated this by displaying mementos of her family throughout the Richmond Hill mansion. The button collection that she strung as a young girl was displayed in the Front Parlor. Gabrielle's bedroom once contained a tall, ornate gold mirror that had hung in her home in Richmond. Elsewhere in the house cabinet-sized portraits of her grandparents, Richard and Mary (Coleman) Wortham, and a marble bust of her sister, Mrs. J. L. M. Curry (Mary Thomas).

The Oak Hall held a portrait of Gay's father and photographs of her five sisters, displayed in unusual frames. A rosewood cabinet that had once belonged to her mother stood beneath a striking, life-size portrait of Richmond Pearson, Jr., who was an outstanding young student before scarlet fever took his life. An 1807 letter from Gay's grandfather to his father, Charles Wortham, was preserved in Richmond Hill's library.

In the Damask Parlor stood 16th- and 17th-century Varqueños Spanish desks purchased by the Pearsons in Madrid while on their honeymoon. And as late as 1961, inside a large mahogany wardrobe outside the nursery, one could find a list of instructions written in Gabrielle's fine hand. These were the instructions to the children's nurse.

Unfortunately, all these treasures were sold at auction or inherited by Pearson heirs and are no longer at Richmond Hill.

At Home at Richmond Hill

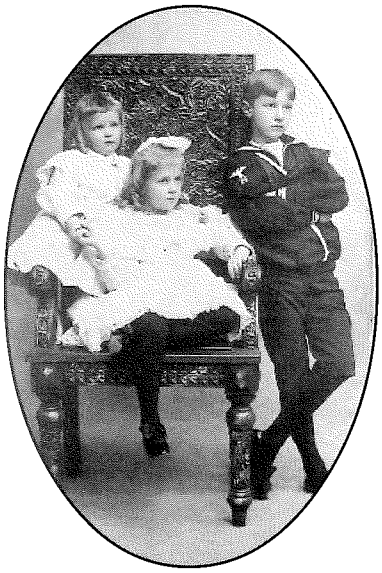
As was the custom in that day, Gay's bedchamber was larger than her husband's room that adjoined it. The room was designed with a corner fireplace and four windows arranged in a semicircle to take advantage of crosscurrents of light and fresh mountain air. When Gay lived in this room, she slept in a mahogany bed in which her son Thomas was born. The bed had an enormous headboard and was dressed with a graceful canopy and Battenberg lace spread. Like other Victorian women, Gay displayed her silver kid-glove stretchers nearby.

Gabrielle's Final Trip Abroad

Richmond Pearson died in 1923 and Gabrielle survived her husband by only one year. She took her last trip abroad during that year, leaving Asheville in January 30, 1924, by train for New York. She and a companion traveled to the Orient, Damascus, Alexandria, and Paris. In Persia Gabrielle met her son Thomas, but, while there, she became very ill with symptoms of malaria.

Despite her illness, Gabrielle was determined to continue her journey home. In Paris, her daughter Marjorie joined the group, and they continued to New York, arriving there December 17. Gabrielle Pearson collapsed and died in New York. Her body arrived at the chapel of Asheville's St. Mary's Church on December 18. She was buried in Riverside Cemetery on December 19, 1924.

The Family of Richmond & Gabrielle



Thomas, Marjorie, and Richmond in 1897.

Richmond Pearson, Jr. 1886–1900

Marjorie Noel Pearson 1890–1972

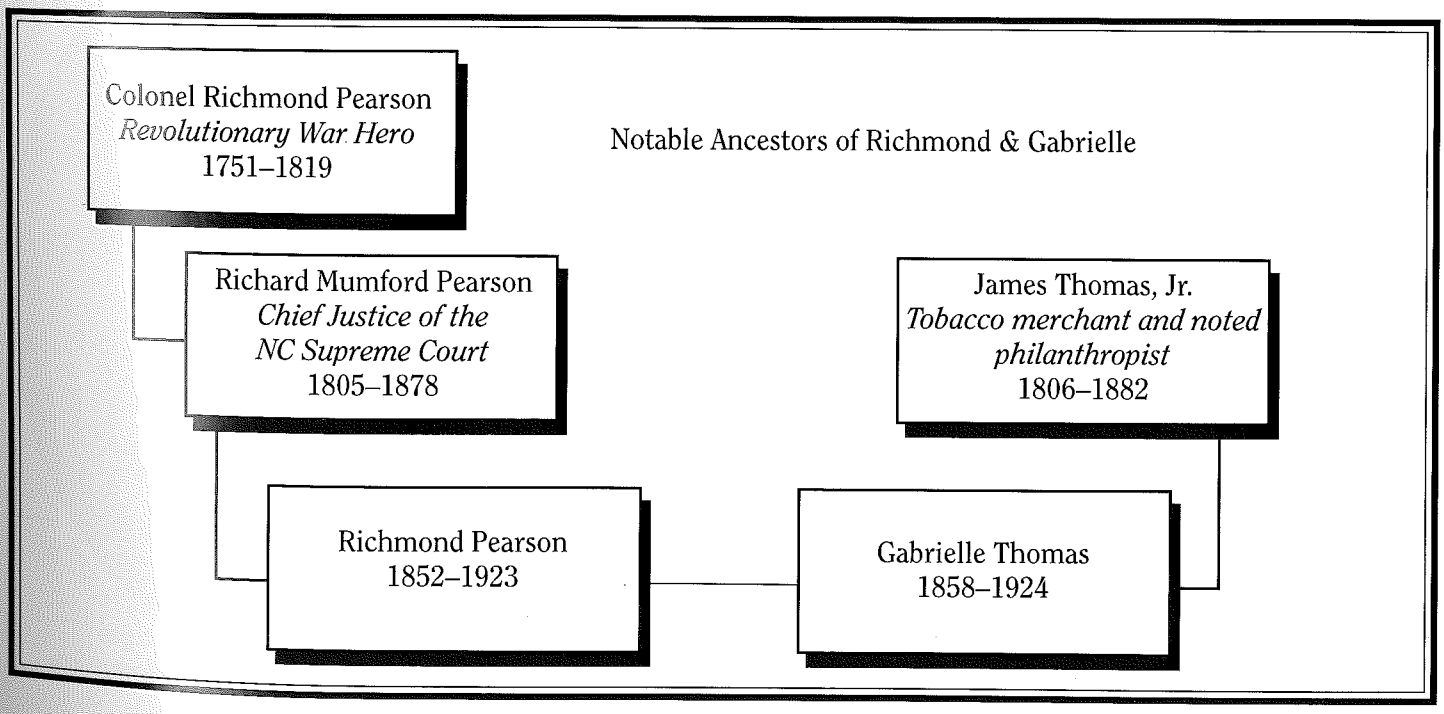
James Thomas Pearson 1893–1963

Gabrielle and Richmond Pearson had three children: Richmond, Jr.; Marjorie Noel; and James Thomas.

Richmond, Jr., excelled in his studies and seemed to have a promising future yet died at the young age of 14 of scarlet fever.

Marjorie was an accomplished linguist who was devoted to family life. Little is known about her except that she spent most of her life traveling abroad with her family. At age 61 she and her brother Thomas,having completed their world travels, returned to Asheville and reopened the family home for summer tours. She remained at Richmond Hill until her death in 1972.

Thomas inherited a family tradition of public service, which he continued with distinction until his death in 1963. He received his early education in Europe while his father served as United States Consul there. Thomas served in World War I as a captain with the American Expeditionary Force. He was also foreign trade editor of the New York Evening Post after the war. He graduated from Princeton University in 1915, and his own career was that of international economic adviser to several foreign countries.



Chronology: Richmond Pearson & Richmond Hill

Thomas Pearson and his maternal grandmother, Mary Wortham

1852 Born January 26 at his father's home, also called Richmond Hill, in Yadkin County, North Carolina, and later attended Horner's School in Oxford, North Carolina

1872 Received bachelor of arts degree from Princeton University and delivered the valedictory address

1872–1874 Studied law under his father Richmond Mumford Pearson, who was Chief Justice of the North Carolina Supreme Court for 20 years.

1874 Was admitted to the North Carolina Bar

1875 Received master of arts degree from Princeton and delivered the master's oration

1874–1877 Served as United States Consul in Belgium

1882 Married Gabrielle Thomas of Richmond, Virginia

1884–1886 Served in the North Carolina General Assembly

1885 Served in the Lower House of the North Carolina Legislature

1886 A son, named Richmond Pearson, Jr., was born

1889 Built Richmond Hill

1890 Organized a gala Fourth of July celebration to promote a land development project on Richmond Hill

1890 Daughter Marjorie Noel Pearson was born on January 12

1893 Son James Thomas Pearson was born on June 24

1895 Served in the United States Congress representing the Ninth North Carolina District. Served on the Foreign Affairs Committee

1900 Son Richmond Pearson, Jr., died of scarlet fever

1901 Appointed by President Theodore Roosevelt to be United States Consul in Genoa, Italy

1902 Promoted to Minister of Persia

1907–1909 Served as Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to Greece and Montenegro

1909 Resigned from diplomatic service and returned to the United States to concentrate on his law practice

1923 Richmond Pearson died at Richmond Hill.

1924 Gabrielle Thomas Pearson died in New York shortly after arriving home from a trip to Persia.

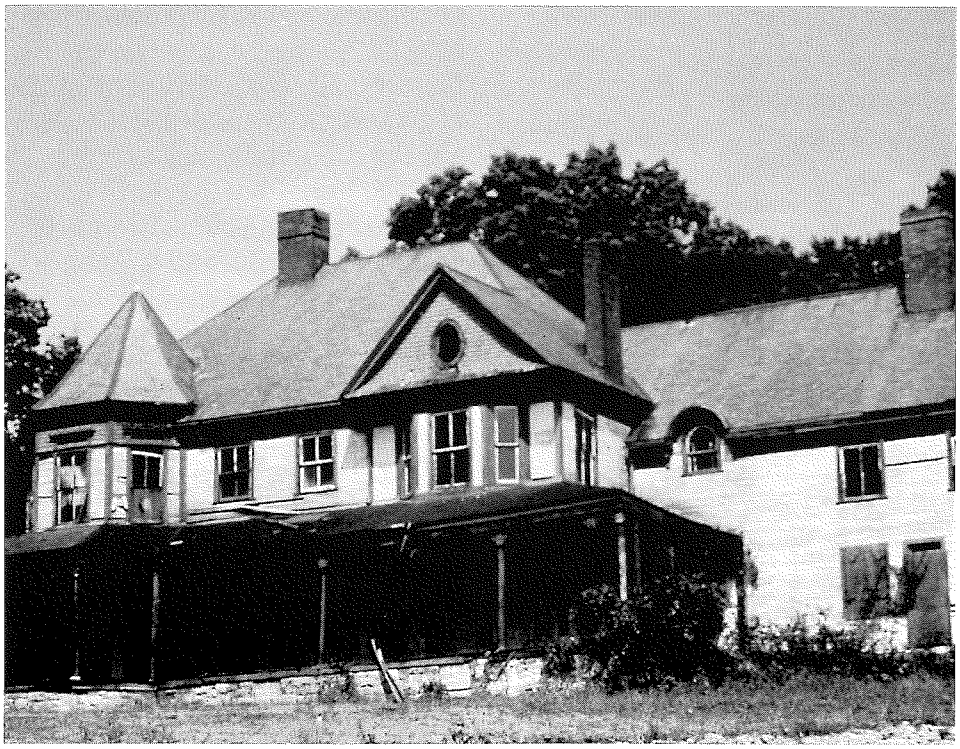
1924–1951 Marjorie and Thomas Pearson left Richmond Hill under the charge of a caretaker as they traveled and worked around the world.

1951 Marjorie and Thomas returned to Richmond Hill to open the mansion as a museum.

1963 Thomas Pearson died on April 16 of a heart ailment.

1972 Marjorie Pearson died on May 25 after a long illness. Richmond Hill was willed to a cousin, General Hayne Davis Boyden.

Gabrielle Pearson in the early 1900s



The mansion before it was moved in 1984

1974 Boyden sold Richmond Hill to the North Carolina Baptist Homes Corporation with the stipulation that the house be preserved for at least ten years, during which the Preservation Society of Asheville and Buncombe County made many efforts to preserve the mansion.

1974 A public auction was held to sell the mansion's furnishings and other treasures from Marjorie Pearson's estate.

1977–1978 The Western North Carolina Baptist Retirement Home was built on the former Pearson property.

1981 The Preservation Society of Asheville and Buncombe County purchased 7 1/2 acres of adjoining land, anticipating a possible future need to move the mansion.

1981 The Baptist Retirement Home offered to sell Richmond Hill to the Preservation Society of Asheville and Buncombe County for the sum of $1, providing that the mansion be moved off the property within one year.

1984 After the Preservation Society conducted a three-year fund-raising campaign to raise $100,000, the Richmond Hill mansion was moved 600 feet to the east.

1987 Richmond Hill was purchased by The Education Center, Inc., a Greensboro firm that planned to rehabilitate the mansion.

1988 The Education Center purchased 40 additional adjoining acres that were once part of the original Richmond Hill estate.

1989 Richmond Hill opened as an elegant inn in September.

1990 The Croquet Cottages were completed, adding nine guest rooms and a croquet court to Richmond Hill.

1992 Richmond Hill Inn first received the AAA Four Diamond Award for its accommodations.

1993 Gabrielle's restaurant first received the AAA Four Diamond Award for fine dining.

1993 The Carriage House was completed, providing space for administrative offices and a boardroom.

1994 The waterfall and mountain brook were completed.

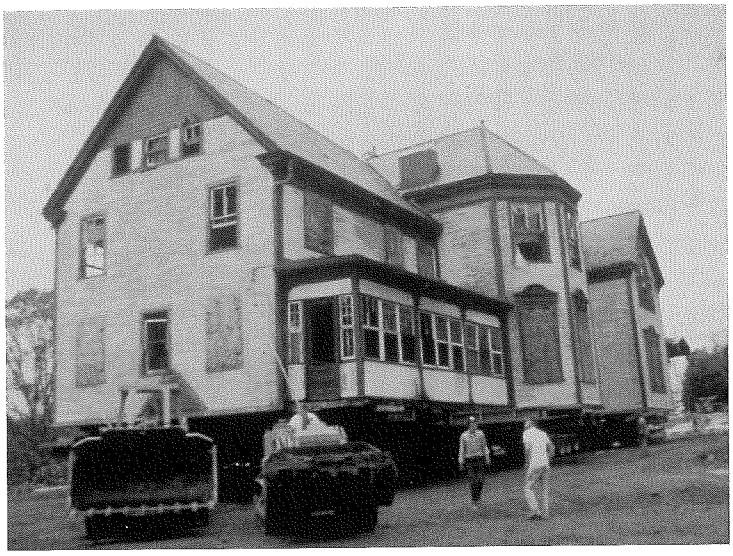
1996 The Parterre Garden opened.

1996 The Garden Pavilion was completed, adding 15 guest rooms, Butterfield's Gift Shoppe, and the Arbor Grille restaurant.

1997 The arbor at the Garden Pavilion was completed, creating an outdoor dining area by the gardens.

The boardroom in the Carriage House

Rescue of the Grand Lady



In 1984 the mansion was moved 600 feet to the east, which took six days.

Richmond Pearson lived at his beloved Richmond Hill until his death in 1923. After his wife's death one year later, the estate remained under a caretaker's charge for 27 years. In 1951 Thomas and Marjorie, the Pearsons' surviving children, came home to Richmond Hill and opened the mansion for public tours. The family's antiques, heirlooms, and treasures from around the world made an impressive collection.

Thomas Pearson died in 1963 and Marjorie died in 1972. Since neither had any children, their cousin, General Hayne Davis Boyden, inherited Richmond Hill. In 1974 Boyden sold the estate and 21 surrounding acres to the Western North Carolina Baptist Home Corporation, a private corporation composed of Asheville area Baptists. At that time, a public auction was held to sell the treasures that once filled Richmond Hill's magnificent rooms. The home was sold with the stipulation that the house be preserved for at least ten years. People came from miles around to attend the celebrated weeklong auction that was conducted by an Asheville antiques dealer.

Following the purchase of the Pearson mansion in 1974, negotiations took place between the Preservation Society of Asheville and Buncombe County and the Western North Carolina Baptist Home Corporation in regard to the possibility of restoring the Pearson mansion in such a way that it could be used as a retirement home for seniors. In 1977, the Baptist Home Corporation decided that the above would not be possible and built a 50-bed assisted living unit on the land adjacent to the mansion.

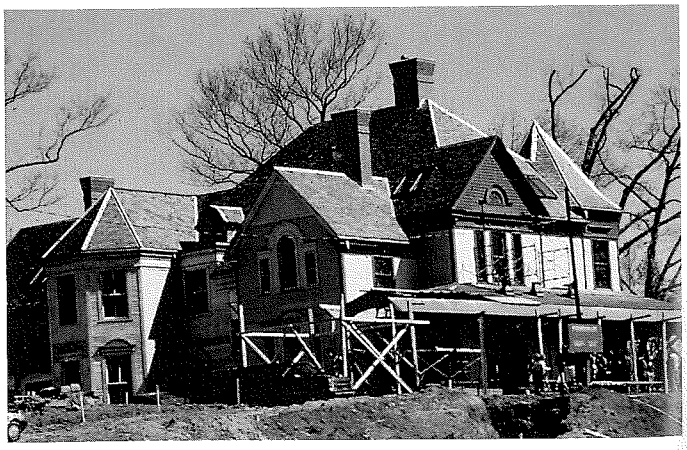
In 1981, anticipating a growing need to move the mansion, the Preservation Society incurred substantial debt to purchase 7 1/2 acres of land that adjoined Richmond Hill. Following the purchase of that property, the Baptist Home Corporation offered to sell Richmond Hill to the Preservation Society for $1. The Preservation Society accepted the offer and embarked on an ambitious campaign to raise the $100,000 needed to move the mansion.

Over a three-year period, the Preservation Society organized numerous fund-raising events. These included open house weekends, house tours, benefit receptions, a fashion show, a Richmond Hill T–shirt sale, and solicitation of donations from local organizations.

During this period, Richmond Hill escaped the wrecker's ball several times. Finally in 1984 with the help of grants from the state legislature and the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation and loans from the North Carolina Preservation Foundation, the Community Foundation of Western North Carolina, and the National Trust of Historic Preservation the local Preservation Society won the fight to save Richmond Hill.

To move the massive house to its new site, approximately 600 feet to the east, the Preservation Society engaged Crouch-Mitch House Moving Company of Asheville. This challenging project began on November 1, 1984. Once the mansion was placed on wheels, it required a week to move because the house weighed 1 1/2 million pounds. The mansion survived the move very well, and the company received a national award for moving the largest structure in the United States during 1984.

Then the Preservation Society had to take the final step: finding a suitable buyer for Richmond Hill who would be interested in preserving her historic heritage. That final triumph came in January of 1987, when the society sold the mansion to Dr. Albert Jake and Marge Michel. In 1988 the Michels acquired 40 additional adjoining acres that were once part of the original estate.



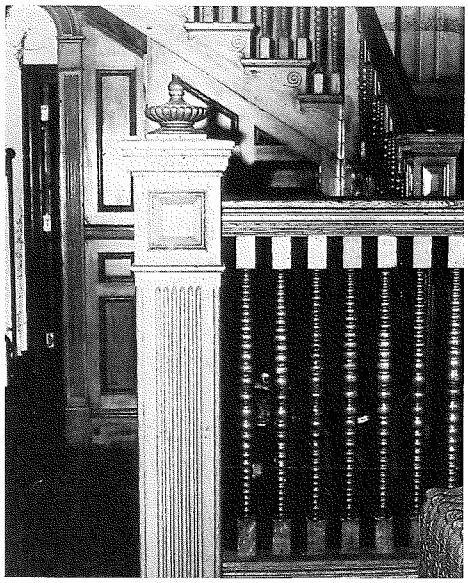
During the 33 months of restoration

Restoration Highlights

•Richmond Hill's original slate roof was removed, boxed, stored, and replaced. New felt paper was applied, and terne-coated, stainless steel flashing was installed.

•Footings were dug and a new foundation wall was built for an 11-foot-wide porch that features new decking and beams.

•Four rooms that comprised the servants' quarters were rearranged into two new guest rooms.



Detail of the original Oak Hall stairway

•The beauty of Richmond Hill's grand staircase was restored in North Carolina, with the reproduction of its original hand-turned spindles and hand-carved finial.

•A 900-square-foot, octagonal ballroom was added to the house, with siding and a roof to match the original structure.

•The first floor windows were reworked, and the second-floor windows were removed, stripped, and replaced. Workers discovered a hidden window in the front parlor and added 14 skylights to add light to the previously unused third floor.

•Ninety-six doors throughout the mansion were removed, refinished, and replaced. Interior doors were hung with their original bronze hinges that had been cleaned and polished.

•A rear stairway and rotted exterior wall at the front stairway were completely rebuilt.

•New plumbing, wiring, insulation, and television cable were installed in the mansion.

•Four fluted chimneys were rebuilt, and the original brick fireplace faces were reglazed.

•With the installation of a new HVAC system, each room was equipped with individual-controlled heating and cooling.

•Richmond Hill's century-old plaster was in such good condition that only minor repairs were necessary on the first and second floors.

•The third floor received new Sheetrock, between-room insulation, and fresh paint.

•Richmond Hill's original kitchen was transformed into two public bathrooms, a hallway with public phones and a water fountain, and part of the new kitchen.

•By extending the house ten feet to the east, a new kitchen was created with state-of-the-art equipment to meet county regulations.

•The porte cochere at the west end of the mansion was rebuilt using a small part of the original structure.

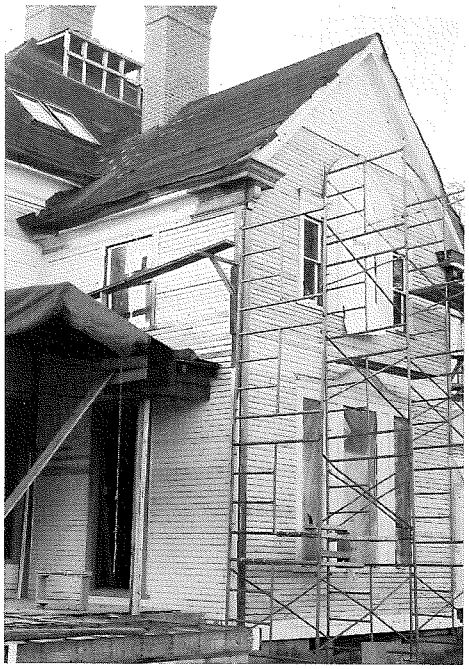
•New tile, fixtures, and lavatories were installed in all bathrooms, and two original bathtubs were restored.

•A complete sprinkler system and crawl spaces were installed in each room of the mansion for fire prevention.

•Granite-faced block retaining walls were built on the grounds of the estate, and grass was planted on steep slopes using a technique called hydroseeding.

•The Richmond Hill landscaping plan called for a paved driveway, a handicapped access ramp, and lower and upper parking lots that could accommodate 80 cars.

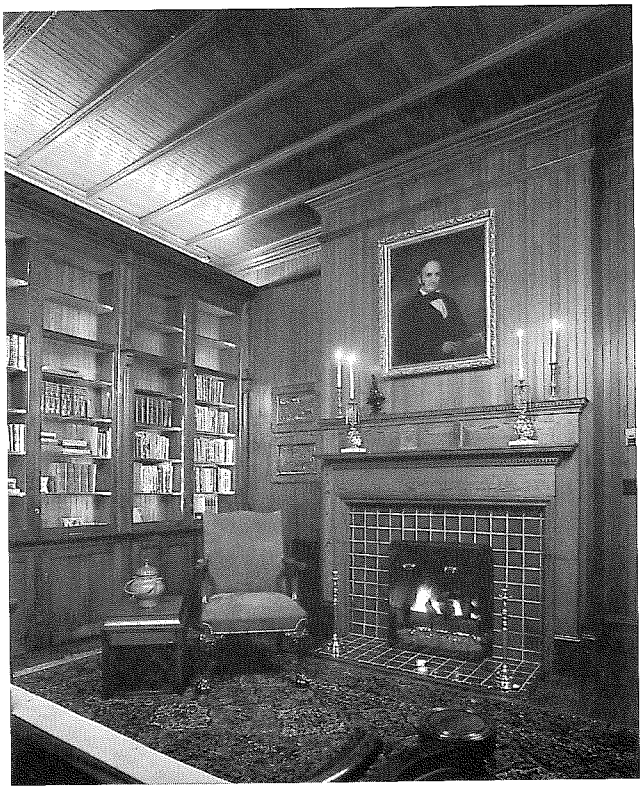
•Original Belcher stained glass windows were returned to Richmond Hill and placed in their original location above the grand staircase in the Oak Hall.



Fifteen layers of old paint were removed.

•The mansion was repainted after old paint was scraped from the interior and exterior of the house. Fifteen layers of old paint were removed from the first-floor porch with Peel Away. This was the first time Peel Away had been used in North Carolina.

The Mansion Today



The Library houses many literary treasures.

Oak Hall

According to tradition, the front hall was one of the most important rooms in a Victorian house. The magnificent Oak Hall is a focal point of the mansion. The entire room is paneled with native oak from surrounding mountain forests. A 12-foot ceiling features exposed oak beams. And its native oak walls are carved with raised panels that highlight the wood's warm rich glow.

Richmond Hill's grand staircase rises from the rear quarter of the Oak Hall. The staircase turns several times on its way to the second floor. Above the staircase, three tall windows accented by three original stained glass windowpanes bring light to the room below. Each of the stained glass windows is a handsome mosaic incorporating multicolored pieces of glass in a simple graphic pattern.

The Library

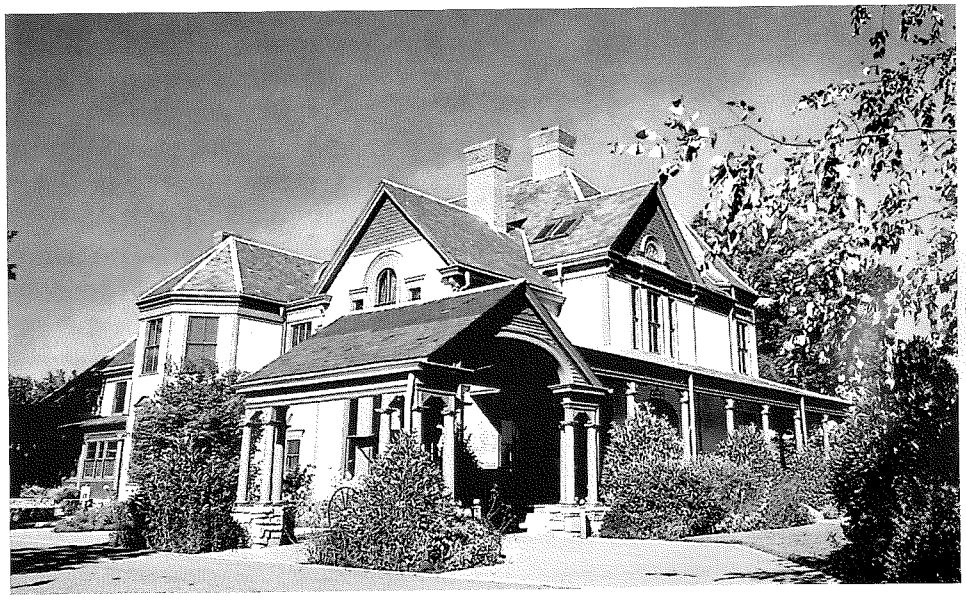
In Victorian times the library was the place to which the men retreated after dinner to complete their day's work. The impressive Library is adjacent to the Oak Hall. Solid paneling on the walls and ceiling is fashioned from native North Carolina pine, but the wood was finished with a walnut stain that imitates a more expensive material, a common practice at that time. Classic dentil work decorates the Library's exterior crown molding millwork and the picture molding from which pictures were hung. The naturally stained solid oak floor is accented with an Oriental rug in a multicolor-panel Kirman pattern. The Library's north wall houses the room's literary treasures. Richmond Pearson was an avid reader who accumulated over 3,000 books. Over 200 of the books from this collection have been returned to Richmond Hill. The Library also houses an extensive collection of books about western North Carolina as well as works by western North Carolina writers. Many of these books are first editions written by authors for whom some of the mansion's guest rooms are named.

The Parlor

Victorian parlors were designed for entertaining by the ladies. Richmond Hill's elegant Front Parlor is a six-sided room with an octagonal bay. The room has three 10-foot-tall windows.

The Ballroom

The grand octagonal Ballroom is located at the north end of the mansion. This elegant 900-square-foot room makes an ideal site for meetings, wedding, and receptions. This room also features complete audiovisual facilities. Additional meeting space is available in the elegant Drawing Room.



The mansion today

The Rooms

Each of the mansion's 12 guest rooms has been uniquely decorated and furnished with antiques. Most of the second-floor guest rooms are named for historic figures who were associated with the Pearson family.

•The Richmond Pearson Room was the personal room of Congressman Richmond Pearson, Richmond Hill's owner.

•The Gabrielle Pearson Room was the elegant bedchamber of Richmond Pearson's wife.

•The Theodore Roosevelt Room was named for Richmond Pearson's friend who appointed him to several diplomatic posts.

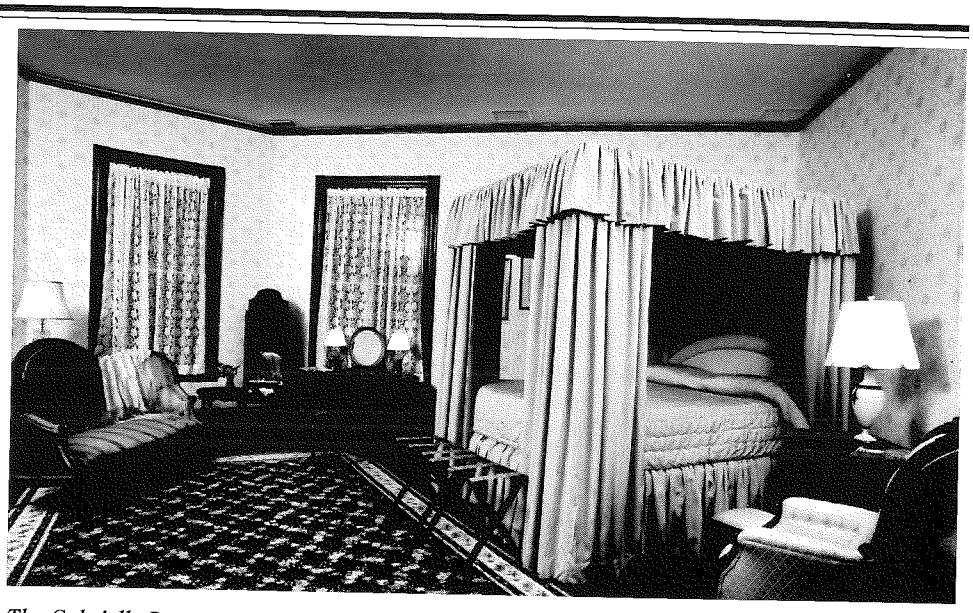
•The Colonel Pearson Room honors Richmond Pearson's grandfather, a famous Revolutionary War colonel.

•The Chief Justice Suite was named for Richmond Pearson's father, Richmond Mumford Pearson, who served on the North Carolina Supreme Court for twenty years during the Civil War era.

•The Sidney Lanier Room was named in memory of Richmond Pearson's cousin, a renowned poet and musician, who camped on the Richmond Hill property before the mansion was built in an attempt to cure his tuberculosis in 1881.

•The O. Henry Room is the ideal place to reminisce about the memorable characters that came alive in O. Henry's clever short stories.

The third-floor guest rooms were named for writers who were natives of Asheville or who spent time writing in the Asheville area. Each room displays its namesake author's biography as well as a collection of the author's works for guests' enjoyment.



The Gabrielle Pearson room

•The F. Scott Fitzgerald Room celebrates the author of *The Great Gatsby*, who spent a great deal of time in Asheville during the 1930s.

•The John Ehle Room honors a renowned Asheville native whose works dramatize the gentle nature and pride of the mountain people and the richness of western North Carolina life.

•The Wilma Dykeman Room was named in honor of Asheville native Wilma Dykeman, whose award-winning books have brought to life the historic heritage and contemporary challenges of the Appalachian region and the entire country.

•The Gail Godwin Room is a tribute to Gail Godwin, whose inspiration and settings for her many novels and short stories came from Asheville and her native South.

•The Carl Sandburg Room commemorates celebrated author and poet Carl Sandburg, who resided at Connemara Farm near Asheville throughout the last 22 years of his life.

Gabrielle's

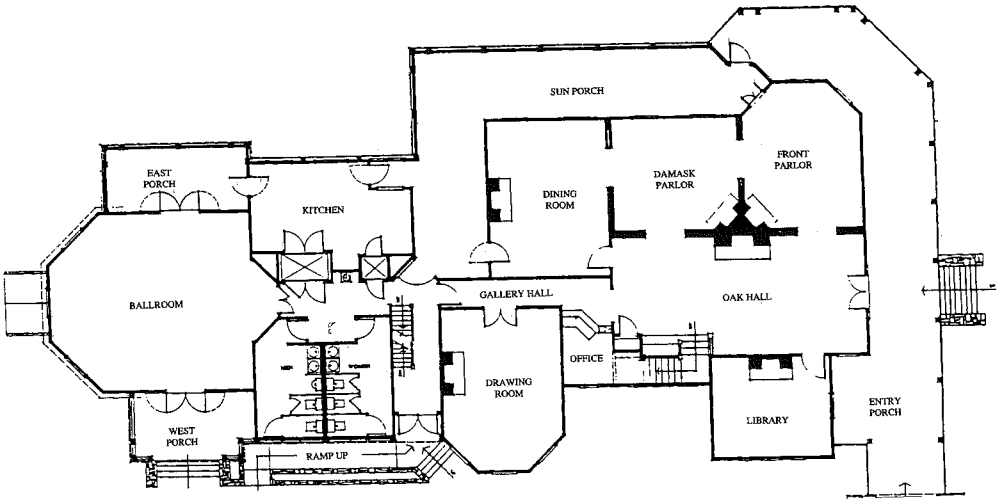
Richmond Hill's restaurant in the mansion is named for Gabrielle Pearson, the wife of the man who built Richmond Hill. Gabrielle served as a gracious hostess for this prominent statesman and ambassador and at diplomatic posts around the world. Guests of the inn, as well as visitors and members of the surrounding community are welcome for dining.

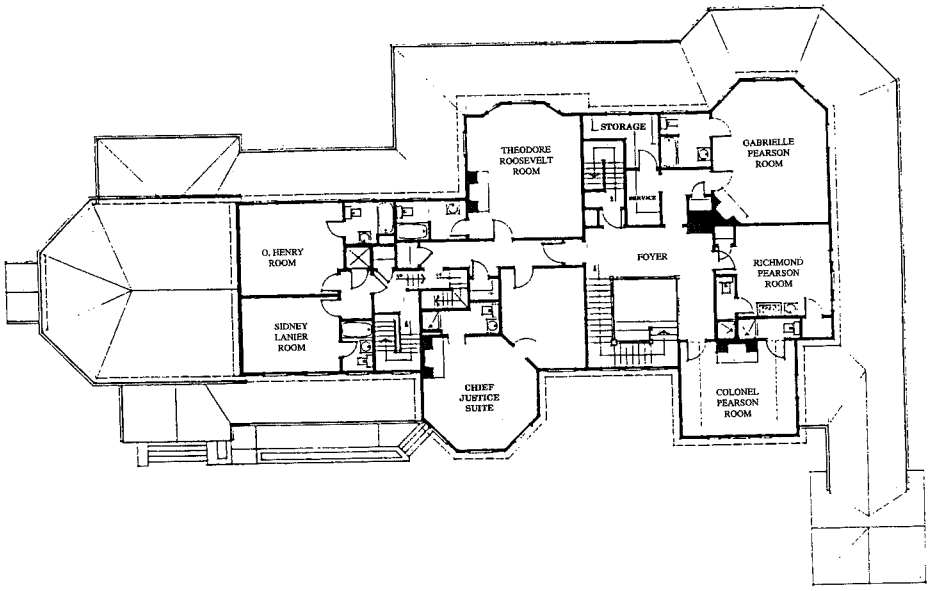
Gabrielle's features American and nouvelle cuisine with an emphasis on fresh foods available locally. Guests have their choice of two areas in which to dine: the dining room, which recalls the formality of traditional Victorian dining, or the sun porch, being more casual with its wicker furniture and ceiling fans.

The sun porch in Gabrielle's

Floor Plans of the Mansion

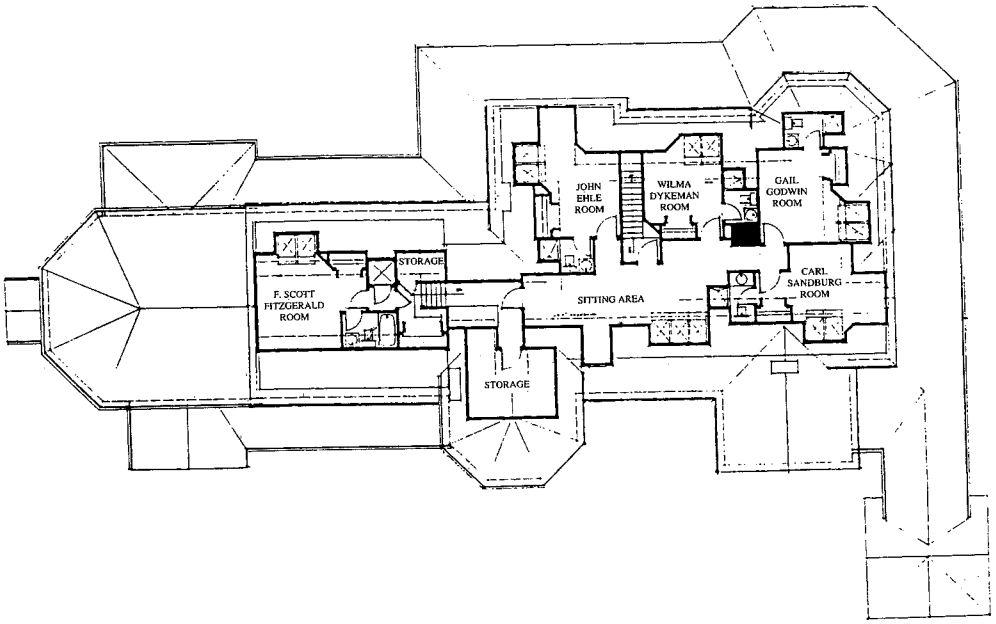
First Level





Second Level

Third Level



The Croquet Cottages

The beauty of the Blue Ridge Mountains surrounds the Croquet Cottages, providing a tranquil setting reminiscent of a Victorian country retreat. Jim Samsel, architect for the project, designed the cottages to complement the Victorian architecture of the inn while offering an attractive addition to the original accommodations. The five cottages, completed in 1990, added nine units to the inn and are named for native North Carolina shrubs and trees. The front porch of each cottage offers a splendid view of the neatly manicured croquet courtyard.

The Rooms

•Seven Oaks was named for the stand of trees that shade the building. During autumn the oaks' leaves add to the color of the season with vivid hues of red and deep brown.

•The Chestnut was named for the chestnut tree, that was once one of the largest and most abundant species in the Smoky Mountains.

•The Dogwood was named after the tree that is one of the more abundant species in the region and is cherished for its beautiful greenish-white flowers that bloom during the last three weeks of April.

•The Hawthorn was named after the thorny shrub or tree, that is also known as the thorn apple. It is often cultivated as an ornamental tree because of its beautiful and fragrant flowers and autumn color.

•The Hemlock honors the stately evergreen trees belonging to the pine family. The hemlock tree has dark green needles and ranges from Canada to the mountains of Georgia.

•The Laurel was named after the shrub or tree bearing pink or white flowers abundant in the area.

•The Magnolia pays tribute to a tree that graces many southern gardens with its snowy white flowers and dark green leaves. Magnolias in the Blue Ridge Mountains generally bloom in late April, and the flowers often last until June.

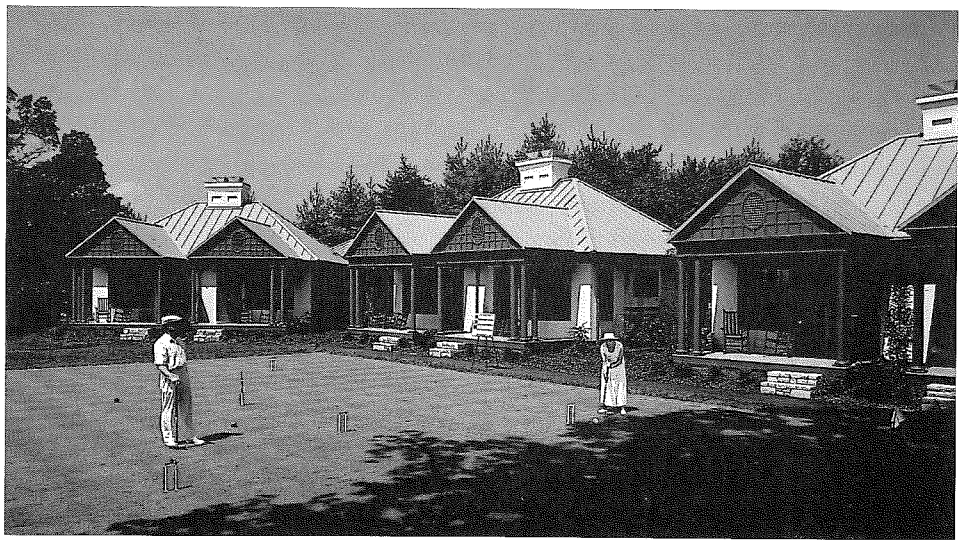
•The Redbud honors the ornamental flowering tree, also known as the Judas tree, that is entirely covered with delicate pink blossoms in early spring.

•The Willows was named in recognition of a graceful tree with slender branches and narrow leaves. Wood from this tree is often used in making baskets and furniture because it is soft and easily shaped.

The Chestnut Room

The Croquet Courtyard

At Richmond Hill we realize the importance in preserving the natural beauty of the environment. So, it is only natural that Chip Callaway, garden designer for the estate, created the croquet courtyard to blend in with the natural beauty of the surroundings while providing a suitable playing area. While not large enough for official United States Croquet Association tournaments, the lawn is adequately sized for challenging play. The croquet lawn is comprised of Pencroft creeping bent grass with zero degree elevation for an ideal playing surface and smooth, accurate shots. Tournament-quality equipment is supplied by the Mac Penwell organization.



The Michels, proprietors of the inn, playing a game of croquet

The Garden Pavilion

Overlooking the Garden Pavilion and Parterre Garden

The Garden Pavilion, designed by architect Jim Samsel, was completed in 1996 and reflects the grand tradition of the Victorian era. It is comprised of 15 guest rooms, the Arbor Grille, and Butterfield's Gift Shoppe. All Garden Pavilion rooms overlook the mansion, the Parterre Garden, and the waterfall.

The Rooms

•The Thomas Wolfe Room is a tribute to the Asheville native Thomas Wolfe, who became a sensation with his first novel, *Look Homeward Angel.*

•The Battery Park Room was named after The Battery Park Hotel, the famed establishment that dominated Victorian Asheville from 1886–1921.

•The Fourth of July Room commemorates the 1890 Indepedence Day celebration at Richmond Hill in which the entire city of Asheville was invited by the gracious hosts, Richmond and Gabrielle Pearson.

•The Cardinal Room was named in honor of North Carolina's state bird.

•The Mount Pisgah Room was named in honor of Mount Pisgah, which is part of the Blue Ridge Mountain chain.

•The Smoky Mountain Room was named after America's most visited national park.

•The Susan Elizabeth Room was named for Susan Michel, who has been actively involved in turning the dream of restoring the mansion into the actuality of a Four Diamond Inn.

•The Thomas Pearson Suite is dedicated in memory of James Thomas Pearson, the son of Richmond and Gabrielle Pearson.

•The Marjorie Pearson Room was named in memory of Marjorie Noel Pearson, daughter of Richmond and Gabrielle.

•The Chess Game Room commemorates the famous match between the United States Congress and the British House of Commons played by transatlantic cable.

•The Blue Ridge Room was named after the Blue Ridge Mountains, the easternmost ridge of the southern Appalachian Mountains.

•The French Broad River Room honors the nearby river, named by 18th century explorers who discovered that it differed from other rivers they knew in that it eventually turned west and flowed toward lands claimed by the French.

•The Princeton Room was named in honor of Richmond Pearson's college alma mater from which he graduated in 1872.

•The Nantahala Room honors North Carolina's largest national forest and the original home of the Cherokee Indians.

•The Asheville Room was named after the beautiful and popular city of Asheville which was established in 1797.

Arbor Grille

The Arbor Grille, our second restaurant, opened in the summer of 1996 to complement the Garden Pavilion. It offers innovative signature creations served in our own original style. The menu features a wide selection of grilled items and lighter fare with a focus on fresh ingredients. Appetizers are served in a unique fashion which encourages sharing.

The open kitchen allows guests to watch the chef prepare their meal. All tables provide a wonderful view of the mansion, waterfall, and Parterre Garden. In 1997 the outside arbor was completed, adding a peaceful sitting area adjacent to the gardens.

Butterfield's Gift Shoppe

Located on the first floor of the Garden Pavilion, our gift shop was named for Marge Michel's maiden name. The quaint shop features handmade crafts from North Carolina artisans, sophisticated gift items, and Richmond Hill collectibles.

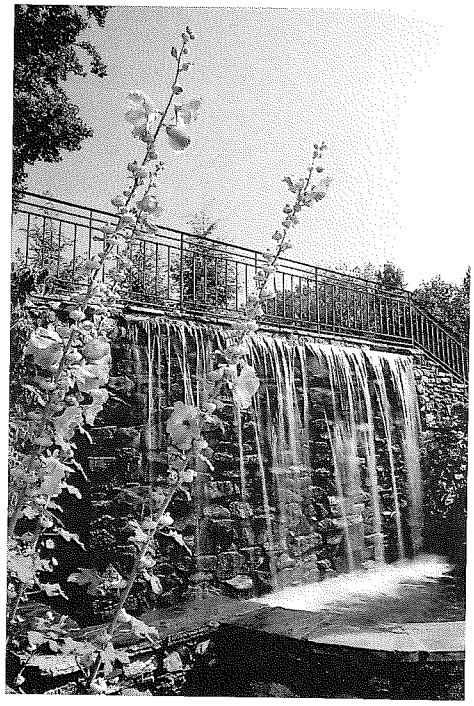
The Landscape and Gardens

Designed by Chip Callaway, the beautiful Victorian landscape includes manicured gardens and natural areas, monuments, and several water features.

The Sidney Lanier Monument was erected in 1953 by the Asheville Chapter of the United Daughters of the Confederacy. It honors the noted poet and musician who camped on Richmond Hill in 1881 in an attempt to regain his failing health.

Nearby is the Pearson Family Monument, erected in 1974 by General Hayne Davis Boyden. Boyden inherited the estate in 1972. At the entrance to the inn, a beautiful wildflower meadow greets guests as they by drive past the stone columns on each side of the drive.

The mountain brook, constructed in 1994, is a natural connection between the mansion and the Garden Pavilion. Beginning just off the porch of the mansion and flowing gently down the natural slope of the grounds into a series of small pools, the brook flows 90 gallons of water per minute down the streambed to the waterfall.



The waterfall and hollyhocks

Stones from the surrounding mountains were hand-selected to create the streambed. An elevated terrace near the end of the brook sits above the large waterfall and offers a panoramic view of the gardens below.

The waterfall was designed to offer guests a peaceful place to reflect. The water rushes over the nine-foot drop at the rate of 200 gallons per minute.

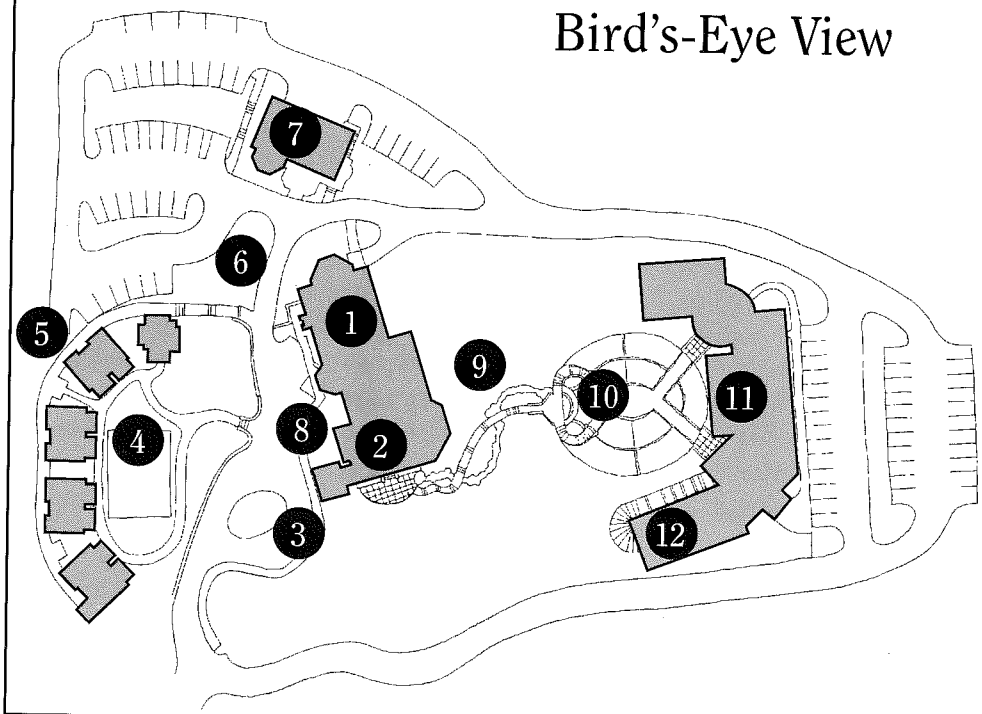
The formal Parterre Garden in front of the Garden Pavilion was completed in 1996. It is fashioned after the great parterres of the Victorian age. Parterres are simple geometrically landscaped gardens with paths between the beds.

A constantly changing bloom cycle creates year-round beauty in the gardens. Winter will bring pansies, flowering cherries, and plants with berries. A tremendous bulb show debuting in spring will offer a colorful display of flowering perennials.

Behind the mansion is the Carriage House, completed in 1993. It houses administrative offices and an executive boardroom used for meetings.

The porte cochere was an important feature of a Victorian-style house. It provided a covered entrance to the house which protected those entering from the elements. The carriage located under the porte cochere is a "lawyer's buggy." It dates back to 1900 and is similar to the one that Richmond Pearson owned.

Bird's-Eye View



1. The Mansion
2. Gabrielle's Restaurant
3. Porte Cochere and Carriage
4. Croquet Court
5. Croquet Cottages
6. Pearson Family Monument
7. Carriage House
8. Sidney Lanier Monument and Garden
9. Brook and Waterfall
10. Parterre Garden
11. Garden Pavilion
12. Arbor Grille Restaurant

The Michel Family

Jake and Marge Michel

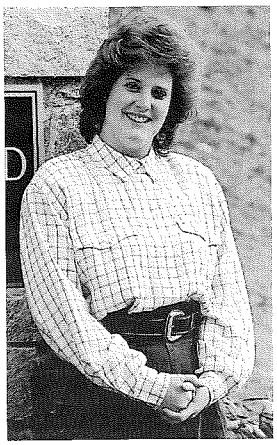
Dr. Albert Jake and Marge Michel first saw Richmond Hill in 1985, after reading an advertisement for the sale of the mansion in *North Carolina Preservation.* "I still remember that cold October morning as we drove up to Richmond Hill for the first time. I fell in love with it right away," states Dr. Michel. Seeing its many possibilities, he became fascinated with the structure and made the purchase.

In January 1987 the mansion was purchased from the Preservation Society of Asheville and Buncombe County by Dr. Michel, at that time the owner of The Education Center, Inc., of Greensboro, North Carolina. Dr. and Mrs. Michel, both long-time educators, established The Education Center in 1972 with the goal of improving elementary education.

After 33 months of diligent restoration, Richmond Hill officially opened her doors on September 22, 1989. Friends and guests celebrated with the "throwing away the key" ceremony, which Dr. Michel said symbolized the fact that Richmond Hill's doors would never again be closed to the public.

The Michels' commitment to a relaxing, comfortable, elegant stay for their guests is unsurpassed. Also, they continue to focus on creating a romantic atmosphere for the many couples that visit the inn. Marge Michel delights in "seeing the joy the people are having during their visit," confirming their decision to save the mansion. Their vision of Richmond Hill is best seen in the words of Dr. Michel: "When people visit Richmond Hill, we want them to feel as if this is their own private mansion, just like I feel when we come here."

In 1997 the Michels retired from The Education Center, which today is one of the nation's leading publishers of educational teaching aids for preschool and elementary teachers. They have more time to play with their grandchildren, travel, and visit the inn. They have three children– Susan, Mary, and Joe.



Susan Michel

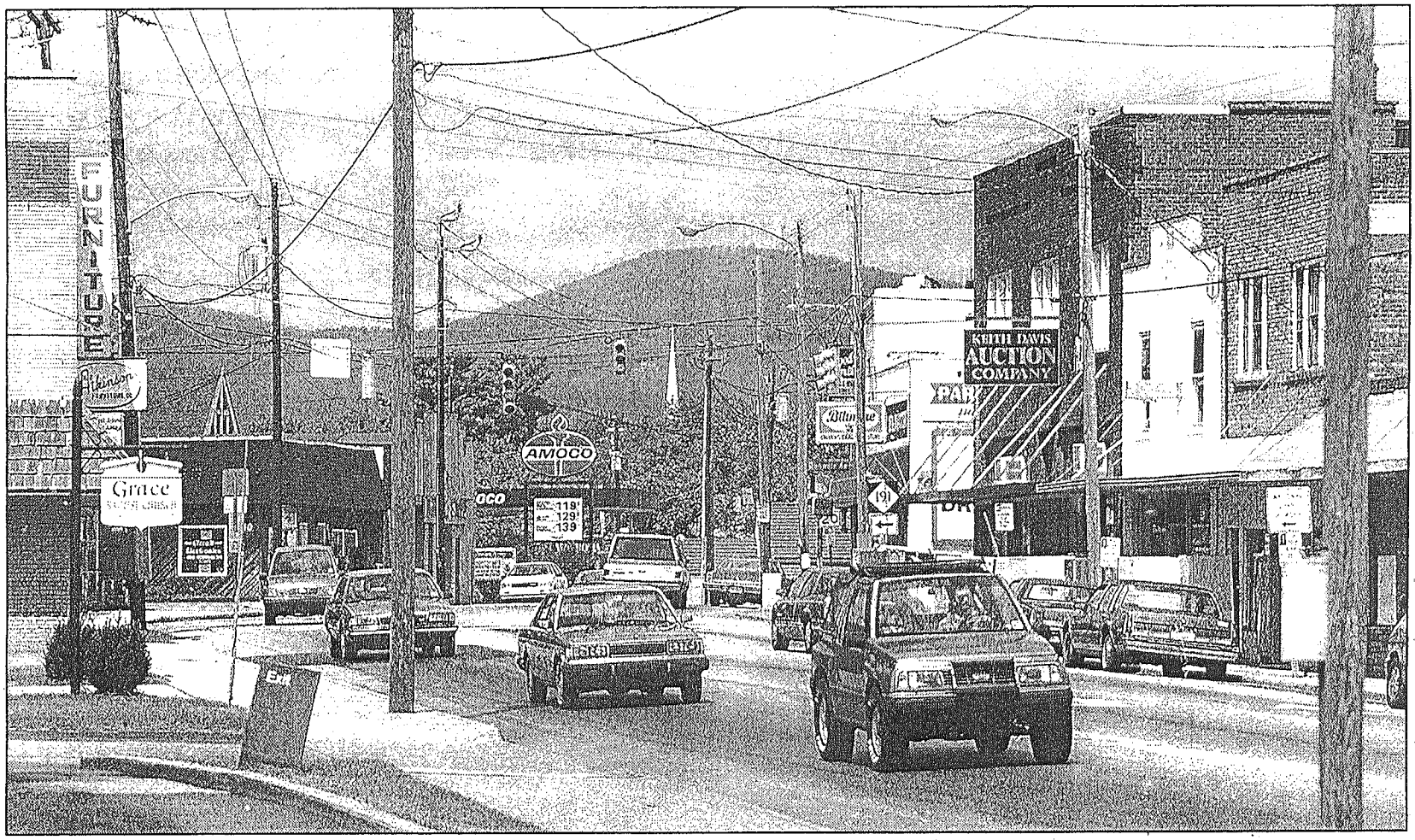
Susan Michel has been at Richmond Hill since June of 1989. Working with the restoration every step of the way, she saw the potential as she worked faithfully with the architects, designers, and landscapers.

Susan is also committed to doing the behind-the-scenes tasks necessary to create an environment where the visitors feel pampered. Because she knows the inn so well, she has a special sense of pride that touches all her interactions with the guests. "I like to treat the inn as if it were my own home, and I'm always getting ready for company."

Joe Michel (seated bottom right) with the restoration crew

Joe Michel, dedicated to the dream of turning Richmond Hill into a luxurious inn, took a one-year sabbatical from his studies to help restore the mansion. He returned to the University of North Carolina at Greensboro in the spring of 1989 to complete his studies in finance. Presently, he is the manager of Macintosh Services at The Education Center, Inc., in Greensboro.

Richmond Hill Inn
87 Richmond Hill Drive, Asheville, North Carolina 28806
704-252-7313 or 1-800-545-9238
www.RichmondHillInn.com



EWART BALL/CITIZEN-TIMES

West Asheville, which was an incorporated city in the early 1900s, has a "main street" – Haywood Road. That is Luke Atkinson's furniture store on the left. The West Asheville Business Association has been working to enhance the business district and the community since 1950.

Health center for low-income patients to open in W. Asheville

By John Boyle
STAFF WRITER

If all goes as planned, a $500,000 outpatient health center for low-income, medically underserved patients will open in West Asheville by year's end.

"The reason we're doing this is because there are no other primary care doctors close by, and it was an area that needed some service," said Dr. Polly Ross, who will be the center's medical director.

Ross works for Western North Carolina Community Health Services, a private nonprofit corporation that is building the center with grant funds.

The 2,400-square-foot center is under construction at the intersection of Haywood, Ridgelawn and Beverly roads. It will serve the primary care needs of West Asheville residents, regardless of insurance status or ability to pay.

"There are no other clinics or even private physicians in that area," said Carlos Gomez, executive director of WNC Community Health Services. "We don't want to duplicate what all the other centers are doing. We consciously chose it because no one else is there. Because of the location, it will be accessible to all of West Asheville."

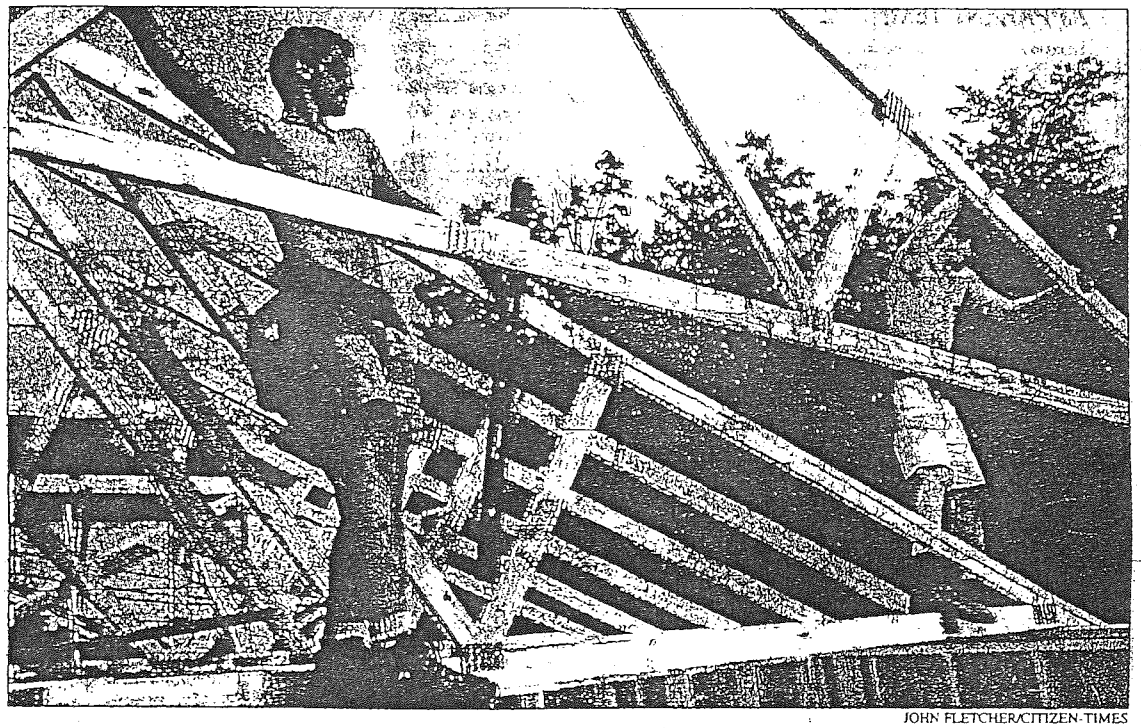
West Asheville is a federally designated "medically underserved area."

"It'll be much more convenient for people, with it being on the intersection and on the bus stop," said Minnie Jones, who co-founded the agency's first clinic in 1993 and has another clinic named after her. "It will help people greatly, and it's in a fantastic location."

Jones says the West Asheville center is simply a relocation of the clinical part of the agency's Kenilworth operation. The Kenilworth day clinic for HIV/AIDS patients will continue.

The West Asheville center will be a full-fledged clinic, with a pharmacy, six patient exam rooms and possibly some dental offices on the second floor, if grant money is forthcoming. It will be open five days a week with 24-hour

❖ *See* **Clinic** *on page* B4



JOHN FLETCHER/CITIZEN-TIMES

David Young and Ed Stair work on the roof of the WNC Community Health Services outpatient center in West Asheville. The clinic, which will serve low-income, medically underserved patients, is scheduled to open around the holiday season.

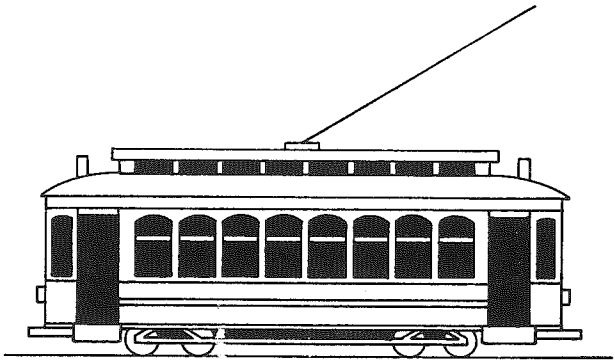
WNC COMMUNITY HEALTH SERVICES

WNC Community Health Services incorporated as a private nonprofit in 1993. The agency's mission is to increase the number of people who have consistent access to primary health care and to increase individual and community involvement in health care issues.
The agency runs these operations:

- WNC Wellness Network: A comprehensive practice of primary medicine with an emphasis on HIV/AIDS care and prevention.
It serves people in Avery, Buncombe, Haywood, Henderson, Madison, Mitchell, McDowell, Rutherford, Transylvania, Polk and Yancey counties.
- Kenilworth Wellness Center: A day health care program for persons with HIV/AIDS. Services offered include massage therapy, acupuncture, individual/group counseling and daily meals.
- Minnie Jones Family Health Center: A family support services initiative with an emphasis on lay health education, disease prevention, outreach and referral activities. It serves the residents of Pisgah View Apartments, Buncombe County's largest public housing development.
- Hope House II: A community residence for persons with HIV/AIDS. Hope House II also operates a long-term care program for persons with a substance addiction disorder.

Asheville Citizen July 13, 1998

END OF THE LINE MARKER DEDICATION



September 16, 1998

On November first, 1886 the Board of Aldermen of the City of Asheville issued an ordinance permitting the Asheville Railway Company to make, construct, maintain and use a single track railway for the transportation of passengers and commodities along the streets of Asheville.

Thus was born the Asheville Street Railway Company, the second such system in the U.S. preceded only by Richmond, Virginia.

For 45 years the street car system served the citizens of Asheville and West Asheville.

On a September day, much like today, in 1934, five hundred people boarded seven yellow street cars at Pritchard Park and College Street to experience the last run of the trolleys.

Today, we are gathered at the end of the trolley line to dedicate an historic marker commemorating a gone, but not forgotten, chapter in Asheville's and West Asheville's past.

Sponsored by the West Asheville Business Association and First Union.

Haywood Road future at stake

Public input sought before council votes on growth plan

By Robyn Tomlin
STAFF WRITER

ASHEVILLE – Joe McCarson remembers when Haywood Road was the place to be.

For 25 years, McCarson, 61, has operated a used appliance store along West Asheville's main thoroughfare and he's seen a lot of changes.

"I've seen a lot of businesses come and go," McCarson said. "I've lived in West Asheville since 1940. I still think it's a great place to be."

Asheville City Council will hold a public hearing today on planners' recommendations to make West Asheville – specifically the areas around Haywood Road – an even better place to live, work and shop.

Council is scheduled to vote today on adoption of the Haywood Road Corridor Plan, which was developed by the city's planning and development staff as a detailed map for future land use and growth for that area of West Asheville.

Richard Nantelle, president of the West Asheville Business Association, said the goals and recommendations in the plan are good ones that were developed with a lot of input from the residential and business community.

"Haywood Road has changed a lot over the years," Nantelle said. "We need to be looking at ways to make it easier to navigate and to get around on."

Until 1917, West Asheville was a separate municipality, which developed independently from the city of Asheville. Haywood Road served as the commercial center and was a regional shopping hot spot for decades.

But over the years, many of the small businesses have closed and little has been done to plan for the future of the thoroughfare.

Carl Ownbey, the city planner who headed the project, said the biggest issue that the plan attempts to address is the problems with traffic flow along Haywood Road.

"The biggest problem is the irregularity of the lanes," Ownbey said. "You're in one lane, and then it ends, and then you have to get in another. You can't tell for sure whether on-street parking is appropriate in some places because it's not marked."

Ownbey said city staff has already started conversations with the N.C. Department of Transportation about ways to make the corridor easier to navigate and to identify on-street parking.

Other recommendations in the small area plan:

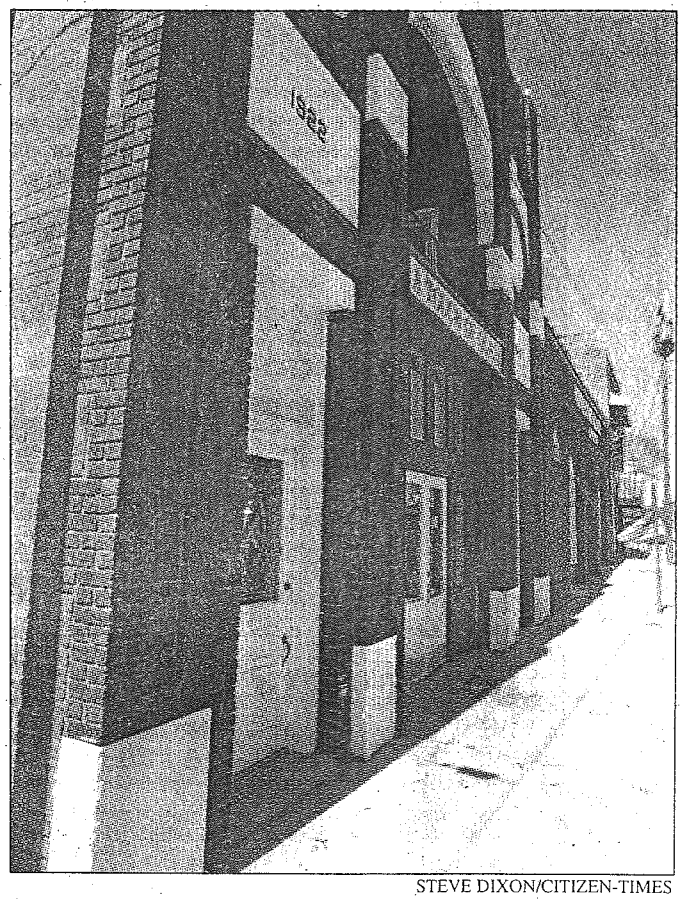
- Encourage mixed-use development that is compatible with the current landscape of Haywood Road.
- Enhance pedestrian access by creating small parks, eliminating sidewalk obstacles, improving crosswalks, installing benches, creating more bus stops, expanding transit service, installing bike racks and widening sidewalks.
- Develop a program to put utilities underground.
- Establish street festivals.
- Establish a loan program with area banks and the Preservation Society that would help business owners improve the facades of their buildings.
- Develop requirements for commercial signs that provide uniformity of design and character.

Councilman Tommy Sellers, whose family owns a business along Haywood Road, said he hopes the plan will help give direction to an area that is part of the historic fabric of the city.

"My dream for years has been to have Haywood Road be as vibrant as the downtowns of Black Mountain, Waynesville or Hendersonville," Sellers said.

WANT TO GO?

What: Asheville City Council formal session
When: 5 p.m. today
Where: City Council Chamber, second floor of the Asheville City Hall



STEVE DIXON/CITIZEN-TIMES

Residents concerned about the future of West Asheville, particularly the corridor along Haywood Road, can speak tonight at a public hearing held by the Asheville City Council. City planners have devised a plan for the area. Here, a building dating back to 1922 houses "A Touch of Glass."

LUANN LAUBSCHER/CITIZEN-TIMES

Leonard Kaminski enjoys his weekly Krispy Kreme treat – a filled doughnut and coffee.

Krispy Kreme plans sweet deal

Company hopes stock offering, new stores lead to more success

By Luann Laubscher
STAFF WRITER

ASHEVILLE – Krispy Kreme doughnuts have been a well-kept Southern secret since 1937.

A few years ago, makers of the glazed delights started sharing the secret by building 130 stores in 17 states, including New York, St. Louis, Omaha, Neb., Las Vegas and California.

Continuing to spread the wealth, the Winston-Salem company announced last week it is considering an underwritten initial public offering of shares of its common stock.

Company officials said they plan to file registration papers for the possible public offering during the fourth quarter of this year and to complete the offering in early 2000.

The McAleer family owns 50 percent of the company. The local franchise is owned by Sam Moore and operated by his son, Robert.

Last year Krispy Kreme announced it wanted to build 400 stores in five years. However, Asheville will be unaffected by the expansion.

"At this time there are no plans to build another Krispy Kreme in Asheville," said Marcie Snell, assistant manager in Asheville. "We are still remodeling the store on Patton Avenue and plan to upgrade the machinery, which is over 20 years old."

Leonard Kaminski of Leicester enjoyed a lemon-filled doughnut with his coffee Tuesday – a weekly treat, he said.

"I've been coming here the last couple of years. I usually come once a week," Kaminski said. "I've been eating Krispy Kreme doughnuts for a long time."

The Krispy Kreme located on Tunnel Road near Asheville Mall was demolished a few years ago to make way for an intersection.

The Patton Avenue doughnut shop, which opened April 29, 1979, is the only one left in Asheville.

Snell said the Asheville shop is the only Krispy Kreme in Western North Carolina. It produces 57,600 doughnuts a day and supplies most local grocery stores and 22 convenience stores. The doughnuts are delivered from Banner Elk to parts of Georgia, she said.

The company started putting doughnuts in convenience stores about nine months ago. Snell said it has been a successful selling technique and a good way to expand the local business.

The true believer can also buy Krispy Kreme T-shirts, mugs and whole bean coffee.

Since 1987, Krispy Kreme's annual sales have nearly doubled from $114.2 million to $203.3 million.

(The Associated Press contributed to this report.)

Call Staff Writer Luann Laubscher at 232-5928 or e-mail at LLaubscher@CITIZEN-TIMES.com

Asheville Citizen 1999

ASHEVILLE CITIZEN-TIMES

MOUNTAINS

B

Wednesday
Jan. 13, 1999

Asheville speedway lease deal stalls

By Robyn Tomlin
STAFF WRITER

The City of Asheville's lease negotiations for the Asheville Motor Speedway hit the wall Tuesday when the group chosen to lease the track failed to meet a final deadline for contract negotiations.

Asheville City Council learned late Tuesday that the final contract negotiations with Danny Jones of Carolina Motorsports had fallen through. The council voted unanimously to authorize negotiations with the only other bidder – Hickory Motor Speedway owner John Huffman.

Jones' initial offer to pay $200,000 to lease the track was initially accepted by the council when Huffman offered what was described in a staff report as "significantly less."

Councilman Tommy Sellers said the negotiations fell through at 4 p.m. Tuesday, but would not say what caused the deal to dissolve. City Attorney Bob Oast also declined to comment on the deal.

Neither Jones nor Huffman could be reached Tuesday for comment.

Last week, the owner of property in Naples where Jones and other investors planned to build a racetrack dropped those plans. The investors originally selected a site owned by Brownlow Hyder for a one-half mile, 10,000-seat track, but the location sparked an outcry from residents across northern Henderson County.

Residents voiced concerns about the noise and traffic a speedway would bring to the community. In November, Henderson County Commissioners approved a 90-day moratorium prohibiting construction of a racetrack.

Commissioners began work on a noise ordinance. More recently, Henderson County officials began work on an ordinance regulating where a racetrack could be built. That ordinance, if approved, would have prevented construction of a racetrack at the Naples location.

The investors suffered another setback when they learned that the Naples property could not be annexed into the town of Fletcher as they had originally wanted.

At that time, Jones said the setbacks with this project would not hurt his plans to operate the AMS for the 1999 racing season.

The city was given the AMS after a group of donors gave money to the nonprofit RiverLink, which purchased the track.

Donors made it a condition of the city's acceptance that racing never occur on the property again. That condition was written into the deed. The property is designated for use as a park and greenway.

One anonymous RiverLink donor wrote a letter saying that the only way they would agree to lifting the deed restrictions would be if the city lease the property for

❖ *See* **Track** *on page* **B3**

City negotiates with second bidder

❖ **Track** *from page* **B1**

$200,000, agree to put that money into a fund to be administered by RiverLink and promise not to seek historic designation at the site.

How these conditions will affect the lease negotiations with Huffman is unclear. Oast said that the city had made significant strides in getting the final agreement to lease the track to Jones from RiverLink and its donors.

After hearing that he had not originally been chosen to operate the AMS this year, Huffman said he was pleased that the city had chosen Jones.

"Operating that track for one year was risky at best, but I was willing to take that risk to keep the racers and fans," Huffman said.

N.C. Rep. Martin Nesbitt, spokesman for Speedway '99, said Tuesday this latest development is discouraging.

Nesbitt said racers need to begin building cars, and sponsors and advertisers must still be found. But the biggest challenge is that the track must be sanctioned by NASCAR. The deadline for sanction applications ended in December, but the city is hoping to the racing organization will make a special exception in this case.

"I'm an optimistic person, but we're at a critical point here," Nesbitt said. "Luckily, John Huffman has dealt with NASCAR and has a good reputation."

Staff Writer Julie Ball contributed to this report.

ASHEVILLE
CITIZEN-TIMES
THURSDAY
Jan. 14, 1999

Asheville speedway talks reach crunch time

Negotiations are continuing

By Robyn Tomlin and Julie Ball
STAFF WRITERS

City officials and a South Carolina racetrack owner are coming down to "crunch time" in negotiations, that could determine whether the Asheville Motor Speedway is open one final season.

On Tuesday, Asheville City Council agreed to begin negotiations with Hickory Motor Speedway owner John Huffman to operate AMS for another year after a deal with another racetrack group fell through.

"Hopefully we are going to hammer out something this afternoon," Huffman said Wednesday. Late Wednesday afternoon, Huffman was negotiating with Asheville officials via a conference call. He said the negotiations were going well.

The speedway became city property last fall after a non-profit group bought the track and donated it to the city for use as a park. Deed restrictions on the property prohibit the speedway from being used for racing, but race fans in the area have urged city officials to find a way to operate the facility for a final year.

"It's irrelevant to me if I run it (the speedway) or if someone else runs it. My biggest concern is that the Asheville Motor Speedway operate next year. Our concern is that we don't lose our driver base or fan base," Huffman said.

Huffman is also trying to build a speedway to replace AMS in Haywood County. He

❖ *See* **Speedway** *on page* **A8**

MEETING

Race car drivers and owners will meet Friday at 7 p.m. at the Skyland Fire Department to find out the status of efforts to operate the Asheville Motor Speedway for a final season.

Speedway may reopen for final season in '99

❖**Speedway** *from page* **A1**

could make an announcement regarding that site as early as next week.

Two groups were seeking to lease the speedway facility for the 1999 season. In December, Asheville City Council selected Carolina Motorsports, headed by Danny Jones, to operate the track, but that deal apparently fell through. Jones could not be reached for a comment Wednesday.

Huffman said he learned Wednesday that he was back in the running to operate the track. Huffman and his partners in the project, Paul Young and James Young of Asheville, and Dr. Jim Kasin of Aiken, S.C., are organizing a meeting Friday of drivers and race car team owners to update them on the progress.

"They (drivers, team owners and fans) are going crazy up there," Huffman said. "It would take a tremendous amount of pressure off of us if we could tell those people something definite."

Kermit Tolley, a driver and team owner, said drivers need to know what kind of cars will be allowed so they can begin building the cars.

Huffman said he wants to hear within a week whether his offer has been accepted by the city. Any deal would have to be approved by RiverLink, the non-profit group that bought the racetrack, Huffman said.

Some of the donors who helped RiverLink buy the property made it a condition of the city's acceptance that racing never occur on the property again. That condition was written into the deed, and donors will have to agree to lift those restrictions before any lease deal can be reached.

One anonymous RiverLink donor wrote a letter saying that the only way they would agree to lifting the deed restrictions would be if the city lease the property, which will eventually be used for a park and greenway, for $200,000, agree to put that money into a fund to be administered by RiverLink and promise not to seek historic designation at the site.

City Attorney Bob Oast said Wednesday that City Council had only agreed to negotiate with Huffman's group, and had not accepted Huffman's initial bid.

Unlike Jones' $200,000 bid, which was initially accepted before the negotiations fell through, Huffman's bid is not a public record, Oast said.

"We want to make this public as soon as possible," Oast said. "But these are sensitive negotiations."

Oast said that legally, since the lease is for less than one year, the city doesn't have to release the lease details until an agreement is reached. Oast said City Council does not have to approve the deal.

However, he said, if the negotiations go well a deal could be presented to the council as early as next Tuesday's work session.

N.C. Rep. Martin Nesbitt, D-Buncombe, said whatever Huffman has offered the city for the lease is the best he feels that he can pay based on his experience running three other racetracks.

"He knows what it takes to run a track and he's smart enough not to want to lose money in the deal," Nesbitt said. "He's willing to put the money down up front. ... Sure the other bid was higher, but the other bid never materialized."

Nesbitt said he has confidence that the donors will come to accept whatever agreement Huffman and city officials reach.

"This community was torn apart over this issue," Nesbitt said. "I just can't imagine that someone who is anonymous would stand in the way of bringing some closure and peace here."

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Saturday

Jan. 16, 1999

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Scores, call InfoPhone: 257-2900
National Update: Ext. 6765
Local Update: Ext. 2030
Southeastern Pro Hotline: Ext. 1700

SPORTS

Speedway could learn fate Friday

By Kevin Carter
STAFF WRITER

Months of breath-holding on the part of race fans in Asheville should be over by next Friday, said the man who would operate the Asheville Motor Speedway for a final year.

The track's would-be operator, James Young, said if City Council approves a lease plan Tuesday, he expects to learn from RiverLink on Friday if the deed restrictions that bar racing at the site will be lifted.

"We feel very confident we've got the lease," Young told nearly 100 fans, drivers and owners gathered at the Skyland Volunteer Fire Department Saturday. He also believes RiverLink will lift the deed restrictions.

An agreement has been reached with City Attorney Bob Oast over initial provisions of a lease contract.

The non-profit group RiverLink gave the track to the city last October after raising $1.1 million to purchase the track from five donors. A prohibition barring racing at the Amboy Road site was a condition of the gift.

"I think it's going to go forward," N.C. Rep. Martin

❖See AMS on page C5

Nesbitt, fans optimistic about AMS in 1999

❖ AMS*from page* C1

Nesbitt, D-Buncombe said of the plan for another year of racing in Asheville. Nesbitt has argued before the council on behalf of race fans for a final year of racing at the AMS.

"The city is in a positive mood," Nesbitt said. "There will be no losers in it."

Young, his father Paul, John Huffman and Dr. Jim Kasin of Aikien S.C. would own the Asheville Motor Speedway this year if the lease plan is approved. The same partners are trying to get plans approved for a speedway in Haywood County the following year, but Young could give no time frame for approval of that plan.

Young could not tell drivers and owners Friday the answer many burn to know – whether late model or straight rail cars would be featured at the speedway.

Instead, he gave them a questionnaire on that issue and assured them that he wants to broaden the track's appeal by limiting drinking in the pi until 30 minutes after races and cu tailing fighting among drivers b assessing stiff penalties.

ASHEVILLE
CITIZEN-TIMES
THURSDAY
Jan. 21, 199

Speedway's '99 season still not a done deal

RiverLink says some issues unresolved

By Robyn Tomlin
STAFF WRITER

ASHEVILLE – There seems to be some disagreement about whether the deal to have racing at the Asheville Motor Speedway for the 1999 season has cleared the final speed bump.

Hickory Motor Speedway owner John Huffman said Wednesday he'd reached a verbal agreement to lease the Amboy Road racetrack with the non-profit RiverLink organization and the donors who gave money to help fund the recent track purchase.

"We have an agreement on all of the items that have come up; now it's being transferred into written form, and we expect to have it signed by Friday," Huffman said. "As far as I'm concerned, we have a deal, but you never know for sure until the signature is on the page."

But Doug Wilson, chairman of the RiverLink board and a local lawyer, disagreed with that assessment and added that a deal might not be worked out by Friday, the deadline set by Huffman's group.

Wilson said he had not spoken with Huffman's attorney and that there are still issues to be resolved before anything can be signed.

"We are trying as best we can to see if we can find a fair resolution to this entire matter as quickly as possible," Wilson said. "I can't promise that will be done by Friday. We're trying."

Track investors say they set the Friday deadline because there are only about two months to go before the start of racing. They say they need an answer or they need to stop wasting their time.

Wilson, who said he wasn't informed of the deadline, said several of the five donors who gave money to RiverLink to help fund the track purchase had not even seen a copy of the proposed lease on Wednesday and that some of the groups and individuals are scheduled to be out of town for the remainder of the week.

Asheville City Council voted Tuesday to allow Huffman and his partners to lease the AMS for fee of $75,000, which would be used to help create a park and greenway at the site. City Attorney Bob Oast said some final details still had to be worked out.

THE HAYWOOD SITE

- John Huffman is trying to build a speedway in Haywood County to replace AMS.
- Huffman's project manager is meeting with engineers today to look at site access issues.
- Huffman hopes to have an announcement about the site later this week or early next week.

INSIDE Henderson grapples with racetrack rules. **Page B3.**

ASHEVILLE
CITIZEN-TIMES
VOICE OF THE MOUNTAINS
SATURDAY
Jan. 23, 1999
50 CENTS

Racing returns to Asheville

Historic speedway will open in April for one more season

By Robyn Tomlin
STAFF WRITER

ASHEVILLE – The race to get one last year of racing at the Asheville Motor Speedway came down to the wire Friday, but ended with a victory for anxious fans.

The City of Asheville, RiverLink and its donors and the group that has been negotiating a lease agreement for the 1999 racing season at the speedway reached an agreement Friday just hours before a deadline that could have killed the deal.

Hickory Motor Speedway owner John Huffman and his partners plan to open the Asheville Motor Speedway on April 16 for the final season of the track's 40-year history with the blessing of the City of Asheville and all of the people involved with purchasing the track.

Huffman had placed a drop-dead deadline of Friday on the deal getting the final approval of the non-profit RiverLink organization and the donors who gave money to help fund the purchase of the 31-acre property. The Asheville City Council agreed to the provisions of the lease on Tuesday.

Huffman said he received word that the deal had been approved at about 3 p.m. Friday.

"I'm ecstatic," Huffman said. "This is incredible news. ... If this hadn't happened today, we'd have had to cut our losses and moved on."

Drivers said they believed all along that wouldn't happen.

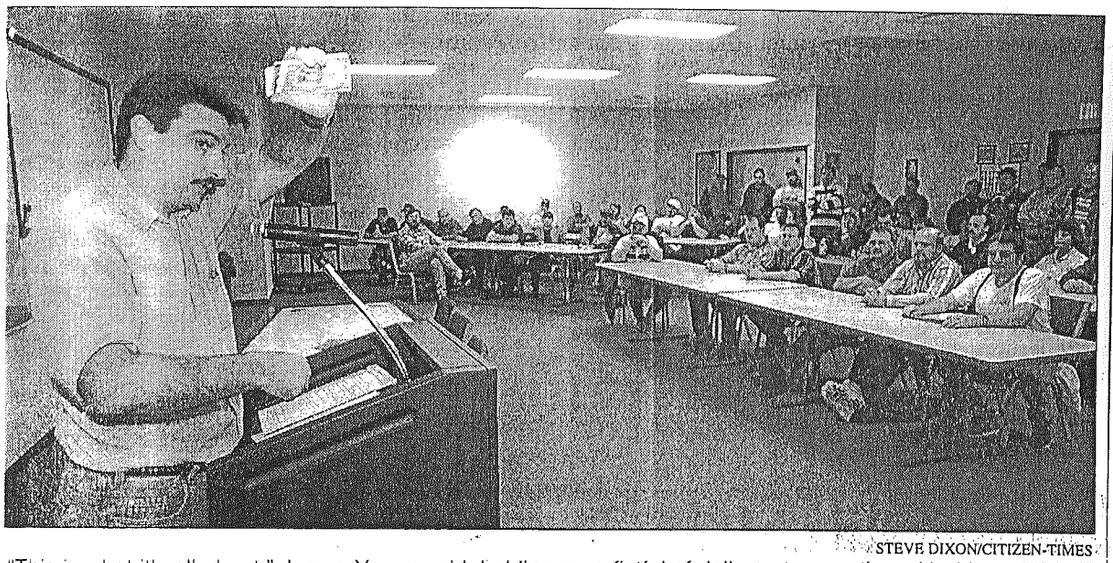
"I always felt like we'd race this year," said driver and sponsor Ed Surrett. "I was going to race this year whether we raced in Asheville or not. It's a place we can do without, but we shouldn't have to do without it."

The track was bought with

❖ *See* **Racing** *on page* **A8**

STEVE DIXON/CITIZEN-TIMES

James Young, left, and Drew Weeks, two of the men who will be running the Asheville Motor Speedway for one more season, met in the press box at the speedway Friday to discuss their plans for the upcoming racing season.



STEVE DIXON/CITIZEN-TIMES

"This is what it's all about," James Young said, holding up a fistful of dollars at a meeting with drivers Friday to decide what type of cars will be raced in the final year of racing at Asheville Motor Speedway.

New track operator claims making profit will be tough

❖**Racing** *from page* **A1**

$1.1 million in donations and then given to the city for use as a park and greenway. Deed restrictions were placed on the property to permanently prohibit future racing.

But race fans angry with the way the deal was done protested and asked that the city find a way to revive racing at the Asheville Motor Speedway for one last season until a new track could be developed.

With a petition signed by more than 20,000 race fans in hand, the City Council started working with RiverLink on the possibility of having another year at the track just two weeks after accepting the property in October.

Huffman, RiverLink board chairman Doug Wilson and City Attorney Bob Oast all said Friday that an agreement in principle has been reached and that the final papers should all be signed Monday.

Huffman said he had received his agreement and signed it Friday. He sent it to City Manager Jim Westbrook and expected that it would be signed Monday.

Wilson said that RiverLink had reached a separate agreement with the city listing several conditions under which the donors had agreed to approve the deal.

Those conditions include that racing at the speedway be only for the one year, that the $75,000 be paid in a lump sum and that the city not attempt to seek historic designation for the site that would necessitate the preservation of the actual track facilities.

"That does not preclude a marker of some kind recognizing the historic nature of the site," Wilson said. "We just want to make sure that nothing gets in the way of this being developed as a park.

The final condition is that the city agree to use the lease proceeds to begin a master planning process for the John P. Gregg Memorial Greenway and Park within the next 90 days and that any money left over go toward dismantling the track and building the park.

> *"All of us at RiverLink hope that this is a step in bringing the community closer together."*
>
> DOUG WILSON
> RIVERLINK BOARD CHAIRMAN

"All of us at RiverLink hope that this is a step in bringing the community closer together," Wilson said. "We realize that there are still some hurt feelings, but we think it's fair to say that we're glad that its been resolved the way that it has."

Huffman said that that he had figured that with $75,000 going to the city and between $30,000 and $50,000 going into preparing the track, he will have to have a very good season to make a profit.

"Frankly, as a businessman, I wouldn't take this deal, except that we need to keep racing here for one more year," Huffman said. "It's not going to be easy for us to make it work, but we are doing the best we can."

Huffman said there can be no more than three rainouts and that he needs an average attendance of 3,500 people just to break even.

At a drivers meeting Friday night, Sharon Tolley, the medical service provider for the track and mother of driver Kermit Tolley, said racing supporters would make sure the bottom line was met.

"We will get on the street and ask for money if that's what you need," Tolley told James Young, a partner with his father, Paul Young, and Huffman.

Kermit Tolley expects a record year in attendance.

"It's the last year, there's going to be a real high media exposure," said Kermit Tolley. "We're expecting a sell-out crowd every Friday. It will be a major event every time we race."

Rep. Martin Nesbitt, D-Buncombe, spokesman for Speedway '99, the group that worked to get one last year at the AMS, said he and the racing community could not be happier about the way the issue has been resolved.

"In the end, everybody's come to the table and shown what people in this area are made of," Nesbitt said. "I was optimistic from the start and now I can say that I'm thrilled that we've been able make this work."

Nesbitt said the issue has had a divisive effect on the community and that it will take time to hea some of the wounds.

"If this had been done with a attitude toward openness to begi with, we could have avoided a lot this frustration," Nesbitt sai "What has taken three months work out might have been worke out before anybody could get the feelings hurt."

Staff Writer Phil Alexand contributed to this report.

SUNDAY
Jan. 24, 1999

CITIZEN-TIMES

VOICE OF THE MOUNTAINS

RiverLink: We're not bad guys

Speedway buy made for park, not to close track, group says

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By Robyn Tomlin
STAFF WRITER

ASHEVILLE – After months of negotiations, the deal to revive racing at the Asheville Motor Speedway reached the finish line Friday.

But the issue that divided the community and created an enormous amount of ill will has had its repercussions for everyone involved.

Hours before the final deadline on the deal, RiverLink Executive Director Karen Cragnolin and Doug Wilson, the board's chairman and a local lawyer, broke their public silence on the issue and spoke Thursday to the Citizen-Times, saying they were tired of being seen as the bad guys.

Cragnolin

Wilson

RiverLink, a local nonprofit working to revitalize the French Broad Riverfront, became entrenched in controversy when it raised money to purchase the speedway and then donated the property to the City of Asheville for use as a park and greenway.

Several of the five donors asked that one condition of the gift be that racing never occur at the speedway again.

❖ *See* **RiverLink** *on page* **A7**

RiverLink feared publicity would doom track sale

RiverLink *from page* A1

Without prior notice to the public, the Asheville City Council voted to accept the deal after having talked about it in a closed session meeting that media attorneys say was illegal.

Once they were aware of the situation, racing enthusiasts bristled and Speedway '99 was formed as an effort to reopen the track for one last year while a new speedway is being developed.

In response to a question about what it would take to get those restrictions lifted, one donor, a foundation that has remained anonymous, asked that the lease be for not less than $200,000 and that the city not seek historic designation for the site.

This did little to help calm the concerns of racers who felt that their heritage was being sold off to the highest bidder.

What started out as the largest gift ever given to the city was interpreted by some racers as a statement about the value of racing and the culture of those who enjoy it.

Despite the efforts of Speedway '99 leaders, who tried to diffuse the fiery anger from racing fans, frustration with the situation turned to threats and exacerbated the already widening gap between the two groups, making a deal even more difficult to arrange.

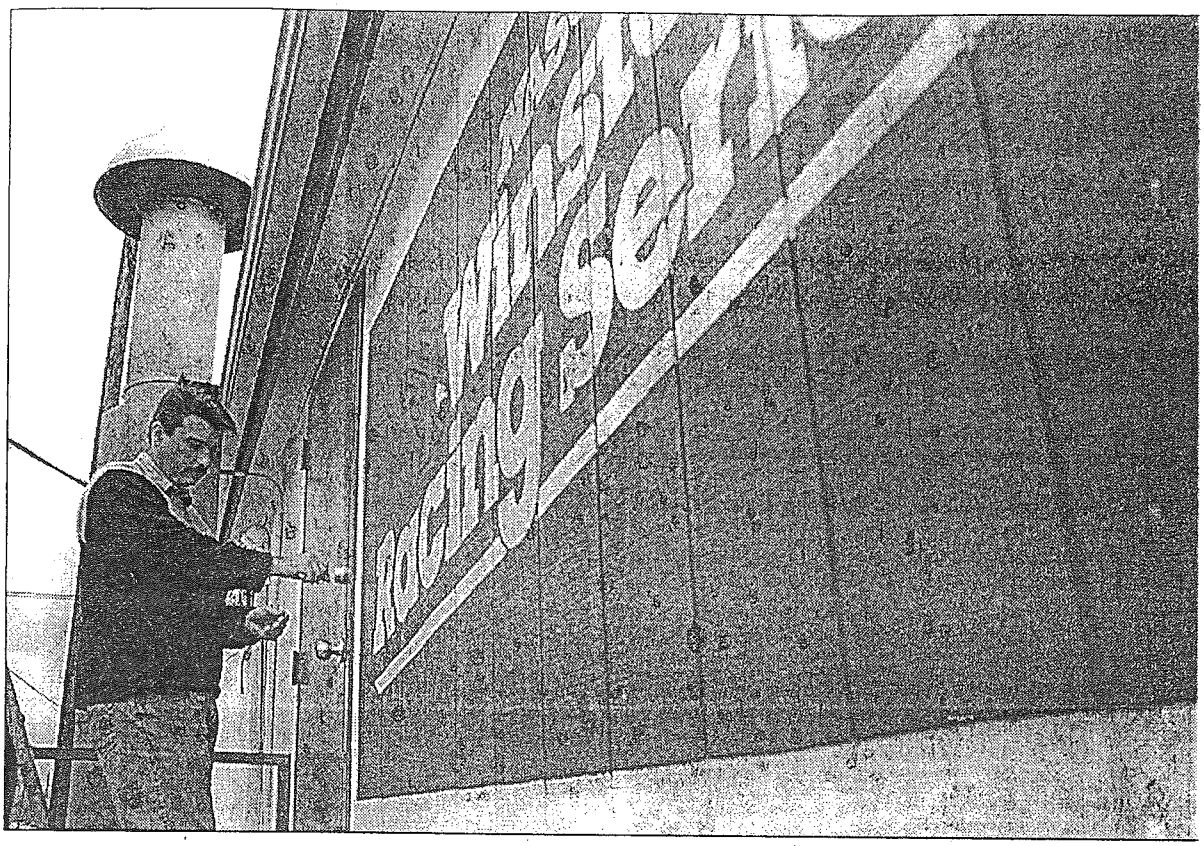
Bomb threats, death threats and what was interpreted as inflammatory statements showing up in the local media did not help Cragnolin and Wilson gather agreement from the donors who they say felt they were under attack.

While city leaders devoted their efforts to making the 1999 racing season at Asheville Motor Speedway a reality, that goal was dangerously close to falling apart several times, say people involved in negotiating the deal.

After months of work developing a lease acceptable to RiverLink, its donors, the city and others involved, a deal was finally struck Friday – ending months of frustration and what some characterize as class warfare in the city.

But the effects of the whole episode are expected to reverberate for a long time to come.

"It would have done irreparable damage to this community if this deal had not worked out the way that it did," said Rep. Martin Nesbitt, D-Buncombe. "This was about



STEVE DIXON/CITIZEN-TIMES

James Young locks the press box/office at the Asheville Motor Speedway after an initial inspection Friday. Young, who along with his father Paul and Hickory Motor Speedway owner John Huffman, negotiated with the City of Asheville and the nonprofit RiverLink to lease the Asheville Motor Speedway for one more year of racing at the track.

more than that race track. It was about class warfare in Asheville."

That was never what was intended, say Cragnolin and Wilson. The issue was never meant to be racing. The issue was supposed to be about recreation.

"What Karen has done is raise $1.1 million to be used to buy a gift for the City of Asheville and for its residents to enjoy parks and recreation at that site forever," Wilson said. "There was no conspiracy to this. We thought we were doing something good."

Cragnolin said she's received death threats at her office and at her home, that callers to the RiverLink office have threatened to bomb the building. She also said that individual donors have called and said they've been similarly threatened.

One racer, who Wilson said he'd rather not identify, threatened him saying "the river will run red" if RiverLink squelched the deal to get one more year of racing.

Wilson says the extensive media coverage of the issue, the Citizen-Times' editorial page support for another year of racing at the Asheville Motor Speedway and the public stances of several of the newspaper's columnists have worked to inflame a situation that was already volatile.

"The vilification of (RiverLink and the donors) has created a class war issue," Wilson said. "This isn't about any of us hating racing. It's about us loving greenways."

For RiverLink, the deal made sense. Here was a piece of property up for sale that fit into the organization's plan for making the river a greener place.

Seeing that the property could be purchased by someone interested in further development of the site, Cragnolin started her campaign to raise the largest amount she'd ever attempted – an amount that not even she was sure she could bring together.

RiverLink raised $1.1 million and former owner Roger Gregg agreed to pitch in the remaining $300,000 value of the 31-acre tract.

Cragnolin emphasized that RiverLink made no money on the deal. Even Roger Gregg, who made more than $500,000 from the sale after taxes, donated his proceeds to his church.

When the deal was announced and the controversy exploded Cragnolin said she and her board members were unprepared.

The deal was kept a secret until it was announced and voted on at City Council in October. Racers questioned why the city did not discuss the deal in public prior to the meeting where it voted to accept the property.

"If this had gone to City Council first and there had been a big meeting, we would never had been able to do the deal, because (Roger) Gregg wouldn't have allowed it," Wilson said.

When asked if she had any regrets about the deal or the way it has been handled, Cragnolin said she regrets that she doesn't have a crystal ball, and that she didn't see what was coming.

"We were not trying to destroy the community," she said. "We were trying to help make it stronger."

But race fans saw this as a divisive action where the rich and powerful people of the city had decided that they knew what was best for everyone else.

Nesbitt said Speedway '99 was formed in an effort to funnel all of the anger and frustration at the City Council for accepting the property without notice and at RiverLink for engineering the deal, into making something positive happen.

"I am fearful about what would have happened if we had not come up with this plan," Nesbitt said Friday. "This was perceived as a class war. A lot of other issues spilled into this one. Mountain folk are proud and when they feel they've been tread on, they don't take it lightly."

Nesbitt said that Speedway '99 canceled three planned marches over the issue, and that they consistently encouraged racers to work for a peaceful solution rather than directing their anger at the city or at RiverLink.

"This deal is proof that Asheville is a big enough place for all of us," Nesbitt said. "This is proof that these issues can be worked out and the community can come together to heal old wounds."

Wilson and Cragnolin say the deal was a hard one to reach.

After the city originally accepted a $200,000 bid from Danny Jones and Carolina Motor Sports, Wilson worked for almost a month to bring the donors around and make the deal a reality when Jones withdrew from consideration.

Less than two weeks ago, the city agreed to negotiate with Hickory Motor Speedway owner John Huffman, even though his final offer was only $75,000.

"We go from $200,000 to $75,000 in a blink of an eye and then (Huffman) says, 'Oh and we need to know by Friday,' " Wilson said. "We had been trying to negotiate this and have been asking those involved to do it for the community. But this last turn of events has not been easy to adjust to."

Cragnolin and Wilson, who have remained silent in public about the deal, say several of the issues in a letter written by the foundation that gave $250,000 to help fund the purchase, but which asked to remain anonymous, were misinterpreted.

One condition was that the city never seek historic designation at the site. Wilson said that was only meant to say that the city not try to have the track declared a landmark that cannot be dismantled.

"These people gave money to build a park," Cragnolin said. "Keeping the track there would defeat that purpose, but it was never anybody's intention that this deal be a slap in the face to the racing community, just that this site be a park and always be owned by the city and used for the purpose."

The anonymous foundation also said the city should not take the deal unless they were going to receive a fair market lease deal based on the value of the site. The group suggested that that figure be no less than $200,000.

Wilson said that the foundation was only making a suggestion and that they have remained flexible.

In the end, a deal was arranged. But Wilson and Cragnolin are now left to ask what the price of this whole sequence of events will be for RiverLink.

While they say they haven't had people refuse to give RiverLink a donation citing the speedway deal as the reason, they have had people say they will think long and hard before giving money for a project to benefit the City of Asheville.

"Philanthropy overall has been damaged in Western North Carolina," Wilson said. "People will think twice before giving money to anybody now."

Cragnolin said the issue will probably make RiverLink's goal of redeveloping the riverfront more difficult, but that it has never really been an easy one to begin with.

"I think what we do involves a great perception change in this community," Cragnolin said. "Changing perceptions in a community like this is hard. People don't like change."

Saturday, Feb. 6, 1999

Grant program set to begin soon

Funds provide neighborhoods with a way to make improvements

SPECIAL TO THE CITIZEN-TIMES

ASHEVILLE – The third annual City of Asheville Neighborhood Matching Grant process will soon begin for neighborhood organizations around Asheville.

The Neighborhood Matching Grant Program was developed to give neighborhood organizations that qualify access to funds that will improve the quality of life in their communities.

One neighborhood that has benefited from the Matching Grant Program is the West Asheville area. The West Asheville Community League, the West Asheville Business Association and the City of Asheville have partnered to make much needed improvements in the area. With the 1998-99 Matching Grant, the community plans to provide landscape lighting on a historic West Asheville sign and are exploring the possibility of placing park benches in the area. They are also considering a beautification project in front of the West Asheville Police Resource Center and a kiosk to display neighborhood news and information.

To receive a Neighborhood Matching Grant, qualifying neighborhood organizations are expected to match dollar for dollar the funds requested from the city. To ensure community involvement, at least 25 percent but no more than 50 percent of the matching amount must be generated through volunteer labor from residents that reside in the defined neighborhood. The remainder of the match must come from in-kind or cash donations. The maximum grant amount available from the City is $2000.

The Matching Grant Program was started in 1997 to encourage neighborhood organizations to work creatively to address needs and concerns in their communities. Projects that will improve physical, public safety, cultural, recreational, or educational conditions of neighborhoods are eligible.

Packets of information outlining the 1999 Neighborhood Matching Grant Program will be distributed by the end of February. Neighborhood organizations interested in receiving a packet may call 259-5484.

INFORMATION

- Neighborhood organizations have to match the grant funds.
- At least 25 percent, but no more than 50 percent, of the match must be generated from volunteer labor. The remainder of the match must come from in-kind or cash donations.
- The maximum grant amount available is $2000.

Asheville Housing Offers "Win Win" Proposal for Affordable Housing

Asheville, NC - Leaders from five of Asheville's affordable housing and community development agencies are brainstorming with the Housing Authority of the City of Asheville (HACA) to come up with an innovative way to develop the Authority's first subdivision for first time homebuyers.

Representatives from the City's Community Development Department, Habitat for Humanity, the Affordable Housing Coalition, Mountain Housing, the Riverfront Development Corp., and Neighborhood Housing Services are collaborating with HACA to build 17 affordable homes on a 6.8 acre site that the Housing Authority acquired in a land swap deal with the City.

The innovation began when the City traded the old Rankin School property for a piece of land adjacent to one of HACA's Public Housing developments. In that creative arrangement, the City then sold the site to a private developer who has since constructed an affordable 48-unit elderly/ handicapped apartment complex. Included in the land swap was the City's agreement to install the infrastructure on the Rankin School property to prepare it for development.

HACA Executive Director David Jones, Jr. is offering the housing agencies building lots. Jones says he would like to give Asheville's Public Housing residents the first opportunity to purchase the homes. Habitat for Humanity Director Lew Krauss says this is a "win win situation for everyone. We get people out of Public Housing while increasing the tax base for the City."

To learn more — contact David Jones, Jr. at (828) 258-1222.

ASHEVILLE

1999 Community Development Week Celebration

Celebrating 25 Years of Strengthening Asheville's Communities

March 30, 1999

2:00 PM

Rankin Heights

ASHEVILLE

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT
Celebrating 25 Years

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CELEBRATION

March 30, 1999

Sponsored by the Housing & Community Development Committee of City Council

TESTIMONIAL DAY

Buttonwood Court 2:00 PM

Introduction	Charlotte Caplan	Community Development Director City of Asheville
Welcome	Leni Sitnick	Mayor of Asheville
Introduction	Barbara Field	City Council, HCD Committee Chair
Speaker	Senator John Edwards	U.S. Senator, North Carolina
Testimony	Doris Shelton	Affordable Housing Coalition
Testimony	Gretchen Livingston	Hospitality House
Testimony	Barbara Edgerton	Mountain Housing Opportunity
Testimony	Barry Trahan	Neighborhood Housing Services
Testimony	Kassandra Smith	Habitat for Humanity

RANKIN HEIGHTS DEDICATION

Dedication of 17 Affordable Single-Family Housing Sites

Invocation	Rev. O.T. Tomes	City Council, HCD Committee
Introduction	Ed Vess	Coordinator of Field Services, City of Asheville
Presenter	Ed Hay	Vice-Mayor, City Council, HCD Committee
Presentation	David Jones Jr.	Executive Director, Housing Authority of the City of Asheville

Developers
Asheville Area Habitat for Humanity
Mountain. Housing Opportunity
Riverfront Development Corporation

Hillcrest High Steppin' Majorette & Drum Corp — Housing Authority of the City of Asheville

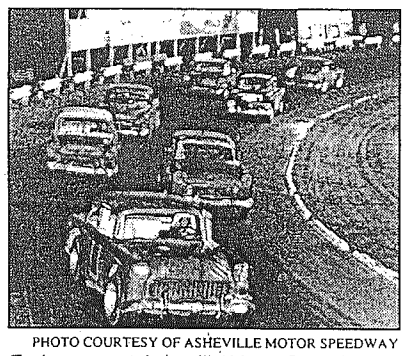


PHOTO COURTESY OF ASHEVILLE MOTOR SPEEDWAY

Early races at Asheville Motor Speedway featured big names in racing, including Cale Yarborough and Richard Petty.

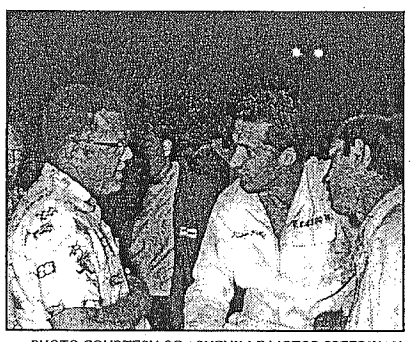


PHOTO COURTESY OF ASHEVILLE MOTOR SPEEDWAY

Richard Petty, center, finished second in a 1964 race won by Asheville native Tom Ingram. Petty won the points title that year.

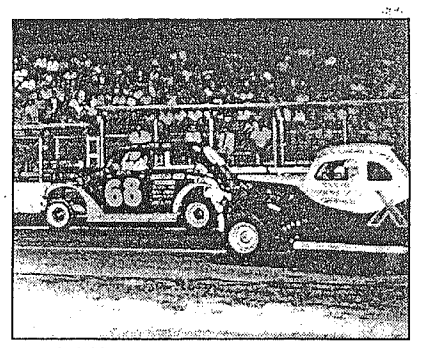


PHOTO COURTESY OF ASHEVILLE MOTOR SPEEDWAY

The first races at AMS in 1960 produced crowds of 4,000 fans. Seven years later that total ballooned to 7,240 for a Grand National race won by Jim Paschal.

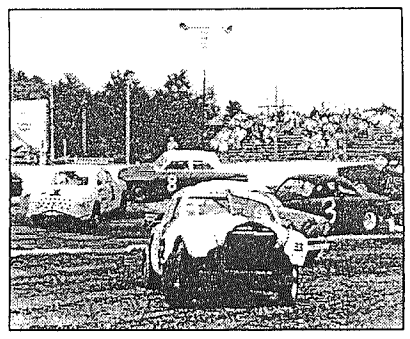


PHOTO COURTESY OF ASHEVILLE MOTOR SPEEDWAY

Out of 36 track champions at AMS, the Pressley family has captured the trophy 13 times.

Racing into History

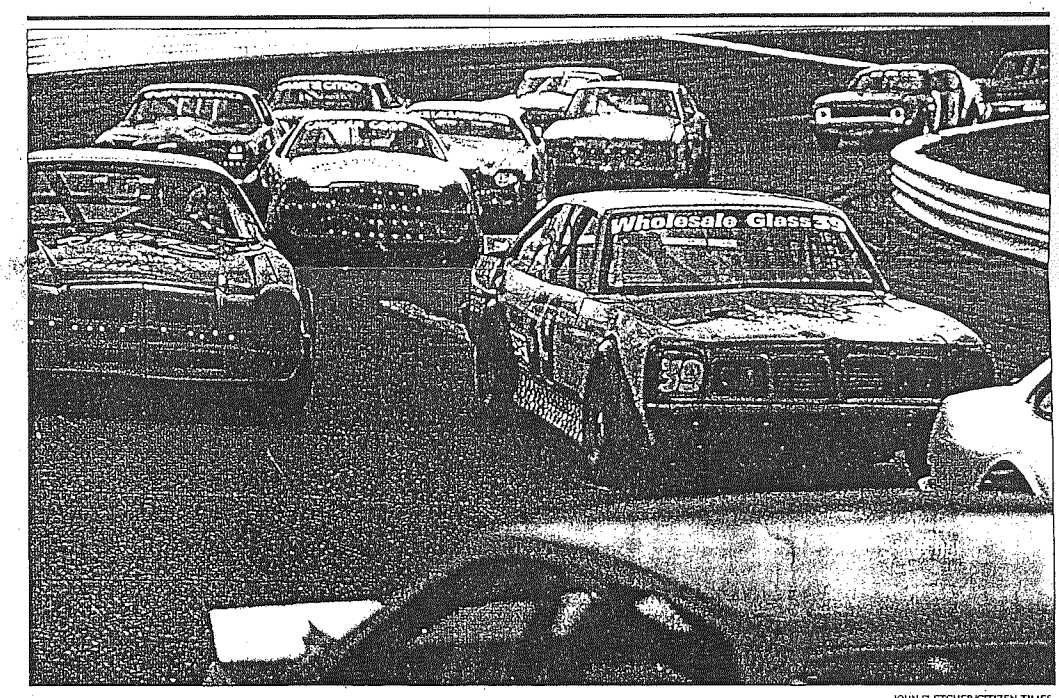
A region prepares to part with Asheville Motor Speedway

Avery County native Joe Loven said the Asheville Motor Speedway is not a racetrack but an "institution." Undoubtedly, others would agree. For 39 years, the legendary short track near the French Broad River has been *the* Friday night spring-to-fall destination for thousands of Western North Carolinians from Murphy to Marion.

Over the years, fans have been able to witness some of stock car racing's biggest names at the one-third mile track – men such as Junior Johnson, Richard Petty and David Pearson. It has a prominent place in the sport's history books.

The last chapter on AMS will be written this season – its 40th and final season.

Here is a look at the paved oval's past and present ...



JOHN FLETCHER/CITIZEN-TIMES

Racing on the river can get awfully tight, and the top racers must utilize evasive skills if they are to capture a track championship.

Tissot's team has something to prove – and sell

By Sean Coughlin
STAFF WRITER

ASHEVILLE – After last season's success at the Asheville Motor Speedway, John Sellers thought sponsors might not bang – but at least knock – at his door.

And why not?

His driver, Lee Tissot, won nine races in Asheville Motor Speedway's Late Model division to claim the track championship. Tissot, who drove Sellers' No. 51 Chevrolet Monte Carlo, was even fourth overall in the point standings of the Winston Racing Series' Blue Ridge Division, which is composed of Late Model drivers from the heart of stock car racing, the Carolinas, Kentucky, Virginia and Tennessee.

Well, Tissot and Sellers did get one sponsor, Candler's Dynasty Homes, which they are grateful for, but nobody else came knocking.

"It surprised me," Sellers said. "I guess they want to see more. We'll just have to do it again."

Sellers let out a chuckle. His unspoken words: Tissot can win again.

"I feel like I have as good a driver as there'll be at the river," Sellers said. "He's cool-headed. We get along real good. The pit crew gets along real good. Everything jells together. There's no profanity, no drinking around me. I'm strictly racing. We go to win; we don't go to run second."

As the son of an ex-driver, the 29-year-old Tissot would not have it any other way. Randy Tissot, who retired in 1980, raced in Florida for years and was on the Grand National circuit in 1973 and '74.

"I grew up watching him and working on racecars," said Tissot, who lives in the Avery's Creek section of Arden. "When he was in Florida, he won every week. It's just

❖*See* **Tissot** *on page* D2

Inside:

Driver Profiles

■ A list of past track champions.

■ Last year's top drivers in each division.

■ A fans guide to racing on the river.

See Page D2.

Sports

■ The Tourists have their home opener on a busy Asheville sports night. Will the return to McCormick put the struggling team back on track?

■ Duke's William Avery opts for the pros, following teammate Elton Brand.

See Page D3.

A History

■ The 39-year history of the Asheville Motor Speedway has included famous names like Junior Johnson, Richard Petty and Ralph Earnhardt, not to mention many more.

■ Track information.

See Page D11.

Memories

■ From bee stings to singing debuts to scuffles on pit row, faithful AMS fans recall their own glory days. We asked readers to send in pictures and to write their favorite track memories, and they did so elegantly and thoughtfully.

See Page D12.

CITIZEN-TIMES.com

Familiar names, famous faces ran at AMS; drivers get their break at AMS

Jim Hamer and Wilt Browning
June 21, 2007 12:15 am

(article originally appeared on April 16, 1999)

The history of automobile racing in Asheville is, in a sense, the history of the sport in the South because it was here, on dirt and asphalt at Asheville-Weaverville Speedway and Asheville Motor Speedway - also known as a time as the New Asheville Speedway - that some of the legendary figures in the sport once came to make names for themselves.

Junior Johnson, not long removed from his career as a high-speed moonshine runner, raced here. So did Ralph Earnhardt and Ned Jarrett and Cotton Owens and David Pearson and Richard Petty and most of the people who were the stars when the sport emerged from the dust and the dirt of hard, red clay Southern tracks to become the superspeedway show it is today.

The late Banjo Matthews, who was to become one of the sport's most respected builders of racing machines, once knocked Dickie Plemmons into the first base dugout when old Ford V8 coupes and the like raced on Saturday nights at McCormick Field were asphalt once encircled the baseball infield and outfield.

Indeed, the unusually short right field dimensions for baseball at McCormick is the creation of auto racing. To make room for the track as it swept in front of the grandstand, home plate, the pitchers' mound and therefore the rest of the field had to be moved to its present location so that home plate is only slightly more than 26 feet from the backstop. It once was much closer.

But the move, made originally to accommodate auto racing, left McCormick Field with what is now the shortest right field foul line - a mere 300 feet - in the South Atlantic League, and one of the shortest in all of baseball.

But it wasn't all bad. When minor league baseball sought to attempt to standardize ballpark dimensions years later, local promoters discovered that McCormick Field was ahead of the curve. Organized baseball ruled that home plates should be no closer to the nearest backstop than 26 feet. Without trying, McCormick was in compliance and it had auto racing to thank.

As was the case with NASCAR itself, the early years of high-speed racing were not easy in Asheville, and in a sense racing here predated the arrival of NASCAR as a widely accepted ruling body.

The July 12, 1948, edition of The Asheville Citizen carried a story and picture announcing that George F. Hall was building a half-mile dirt track - to be called Asheville Speedway - on what formerly had been the Charles McBrayer property once known as Hollywood in the Fairview community east of Asheville.

Hall envisioned a speed facility that would attract stock cars, midgets, hot rods and motorcycles. The birth of NASCAR itself was still almost a year away.

Though little can be seen of the old track today, it survived for several years, though its schedule of events, as well as its history, has become sketchy at best.

"It was what we used to call an 'outlaw' track," said Asheville racing champion Jack Ingram whose own career would not begin in time to test the half-mile dirt speedway. "One of the problems with Asheville Speedway was that nobody really had to pay to get in.

"I remember going out there and just walking into the woods beside where the backstretch was and just sitting there for free watching races," Ingram said.

When Asheville-Weaverville, on the other side of town, opened in the mid-1950s complete with NASCAR sanctioning, Asheville Speedway was doomed. Asheville Speedway could not compete against Asheville-Weaverville fields that frequently included Cotton Owens, Fireball Roberts, Wendell Scott, Jack Smith and other early NASCAR pioneers.

Asheville-Weaverville Speedway, located where North Buncombe High School now stands, was one of the legendary stops on the early NASCAR trail and survived into the 1960s when a group of Asheville businessmen including Jim Harrin, Max Wilson, Bob Furey and Dr. J.E. Owen purchased the property upon which a quarter-mile drag strip had existed off Amboy Road and developed a quarter-mile enclosed dirt track.

The first races were contested on the night of Saturday, July 2, 1960.

The late Charlie Smith, a sports writer for the Asheville Citizen, covered the inaugural card. His report:

"The new four-tenths mile Asheville Motor Speedway in West Asheville held its first race Saturday night before a standing-room-only crowd of 4,000 spectators as Charlie Silvers of Woodfin won the hotly-contested 40-lap sportsman feature.

"Track director Harry Clay was surprised at the over-capacity crowd and pleased with the excitement of the sportsman and amateur races.

"The sportsman featured provided the top action of the seven races as the lead changed hands four times. Popular Asheville driver Cecil Bidix started in the number one position along with Roy Trantham. Henderson's Jimmy Wheelon passed Biddix in the eighth lap and held the lead until the 10th when he flipped over after leaving the second turn. Following Wheelon's wreck which put him out of the race, Biddix gained the lead again. he battled with Marion's Bert Nolan until the 38th lap when he smashed against the bank in the second turn and was unable to finish the race. Nolan remained in the first place spot for the remain two laps, but victory was not his.

"A protest was filed with NASCAR official Robby Combs. Upon checking Noland's engine, Combs disqualified him and Silvers was acclaim winner. E.D. Adkins from Burnsville was second followed by the Ashevilleans Bob Browning and Dick Plemmons.

"Jerry McCauless drove home a winner in the amateur 30 lap feature. Charlie Crawford and Max Wilson, second and third respectively, furnished the action in this event as they battled neck and neck all the way.

"Barney Wells drove a '37 Chevy Coupe to a 15-lap consolation win. Cecil Biddix and Jimmy Wheelon were sportsman heat winners.

"Fans got their money's worth from numerous spin-outs and from drivers losing control on the front straightaway. Clay, a member of the sponsoring Asheville Racing Corp., whose construction company built the dirt oval, was the first driver to nearly take a swim in the French Broad River which borders the back straighaway. Clay narrowly missed going off the high bank and into the stream.

"The first lap of the first heat gave fans an indication of what was on tap for the night as Plemmons and Robert Lowe of Clyde bumped fenders and spun out in the first turn nearly causing an eight-car pileup...."

Little has changed since that first race. It was expanded to become a one-third mile paved track.

In the checkered history of the Speedway through the second half of the century, Harrin would participate in the operation of the track as an owner on three different occasions.

Harrin himself developed his interest in the sport at Asheville-Weaverville where he was regularly in attendance.

"We got so dusty and dirty in all that red clay out there watching them race that your wife didn't want you to come in the house when you got home," Harrin once remembered.

And the track itself has survived floods that have frequently forced the closing of Amboy Road, a loss of NASCAR sanctioning that lasted almost two years and cast the facility's future in doubt, and a series of challenges based upon city noise ordinances. The noise issue has arisen from time to time over the last 30 years.

At one point, the track seemed on the verge of being closed by the city and a poll in the summer of 1987 by The Asheville Citizen indicated that 70 percent of those responding were in favor of the closing of the track. But Superior Court Judge C. Walter Allen ruled in favor of the track saying that the city would not be permitted to use its own 10-year-old anti-noise ordinance to close the track.

An old battle seemed at an end. It was a battle that promoter G.W. Ledford had been forced to fight as early as the 1970 racing season when a group of citizens petitioned City Council for the original anti-noise ordinance.

Ledford was relieved when the action was tabled. He publicly reasoned that most of the people behind the anti-noise move were motel operators objecting to passing trains blowing their whistles between midnight and 5 a.m.

Roger Gregg, the first owner to force competitors to fit their machines with mufflers in an attempt to soften the roar of racing engines, had to fight the noise problem publicly this season.

Gregg and Asheville automobile dealer Bryan Easler purchased the speedway in May 1993 under the ownership of Easler-Gregg Investments, Inc., the company that still is listed as the owner of the property. According to calculations based upon taxes assessments at the time of purchase, Easler-Gregg paid slightly more than $1 million for the property and carried an $850,000 note.

Gregg, who doubles as the track promoter, said recently that while he is not actively trying to sell the facility, it is nonetheless available but that no qualified prospective buyers have appeared.

Through all the owners, the history of competition on the asphalt track itself is storied and Easler and Gregg had just purchased the property when one of the Speedway's most memorable races unfolded.

It happened on June 4, 1993, when two drivers won the 100-lap NASCAR Winston Racing Series Late Model feature race.

Mike Pressley and Pete Silva took the checkered flag in a dead heat. All available information was used to determine a winner. Video tape shot by the track cameraman was studied several times by track officials. Track scorers, competition directors, flagmen, and track owners Bryan Easler and Roger Gregg determined the finish "too close to call."

There have many close finishes at the one-third mile oval in the last 39 years but no one associated with the track can recall a dead heat not being resolved in favor of one driver or another. "All we'll have to do is buy another (winner's) trophy," said Easler, sending both Pressley and Silva home happy and the 3,000 fans debating which driver really won the race.

The track hosted the NASCAR Grand National (now Winston Cup) Series once a year from 1962-68 and a final time in 1971.

Jack Smith won the first Grand National race in '62. Ned Jarrett scored the first of back-to-back victories in '63 after David Pearson captured the pole with a speed of 67.235 mph. The Conover Hall of Famer triumphed again in '64.

Junior Johnson won from the pole (70.601 mph), driving a Ford in '65. Pearson took the checkered flag in '66, after Richard Petty captured the pole position (73.710).

In '67, Petty (73.710) was on the pole again, but Jim Paschal won the race.

In '68, Petty scored the 79th of his NASCAR record 200 victories at Asheville.

After a two-year absence in Asheville, the soon-to-be Winston Cup drivers made their last appearance on May 21, 1971. Petty started on the pole (79.568) and put his Plymouth in Victory Lane for the 128th time.

In '72 NASCAR began its modern era with the start of the Winston Cup Series with 31 races for the inaugural campaign which didn't include Asheville.

But racing flourished in the '70s. Among the regulars were five-time Sportsman and Busch Grand National champion and Hall of Famer Jack Ingram, future Winston Cup winners Harry Gant and Morgan Shepherd were also Friday night regulars along with national champions Butch Lindley and L.D. Ottinger. Seven-time champion Dale Earnhardt, Bill Elliott, Bobby Allison and Dave Marcis were among the occasional visitors.

Veteran short-track legend developed his winning wizardry during the '70s and still applies them today at the age of 65.

The '80s would see Pressley's son Robert move into the championship circle in the Winston Racing Series Mid-Atlantic Region twice before moving up to the Busch and Winston Cup ranks. The elder Pressley added a Mid-Atlantic title to his accomplishments.

In '88 Shawna Robinson became the first woman driver to win a NASCAR touring event when she captured the Dash Series event at the Asheville track.

Mike Pressley, Randy Porter, Jimmy Doyle and Martin Nesbitt have been the stars of the '90s with multiple track championships.

Porter owns the track qualifying record, set in '92 with a lap of 100.207 or 13.472 seconds. In '93 Porter won 12 races and the track title.

In '98 Lee Tissot is the class of the Late Model ranks with six wins and command of the points race.

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Burton Street home to a rich history

Editor's note: *Rob Neufeld, an administrator for the Asheville-Buncombe Library System, writes a semimonthly article on the history of Buncombe County. To make suggestions, call 250-4715. To reach the North Carolina Collection at Pack Memorial Library, the source for much of his story, call 250-4740.*

By Rob Neufeld

LIBRARY ADMINISTRATOR

ASHEVILLE – When Lasker and Doshia Bell rumbled into the Burton Street community in a buggy and wagon in 1920, hardly any other subdivision had been established in West Asheville.

E.W. Pearson, a veteran of the Spanish-American War, had established the neighborhood eight years before, acting as agent to the owner of what had been called the Parkview plat.

Some dubbed Pearson "the black mayor of West Asheville." He organized the Buncombe County Agricultural Fair, which took place in Pearson Park in West Asheville. Many people, black and white, came to enjoy the food, shows and contests. Burton Street's first families such as the Bells, Longs and MacMickens called their new home place, "the country."

A semi-pro baseball team, the Asheville Giants, regularly played in Pearson Park. That was a bygone era. Today, the park's level fields are obliterated, mounded up beside the highway, commercially developed.

Louise Hudgens, oldest daughter of Lasker and Doshia, can point from her front door step to where the field had been. She can also remember riding into the neighborhood in 1920. She was 6. Her father, a drayman, was driving a wagon with their furnishings; her mother was leading a buggy down a dirt road that had no name. "Go and find out the name of this street," Doshia told her two oldest.

"We went running down the street," Hudgens says. "Somebody up the street told us Fayetteville. We came back down the street shouting 'Faceville! Faceville!'"

It was an idyllic time for the children of Burton Street. They played in the woods and creek that extended along and past where Patton Avenue now runs. In these woods, also, their parents grazed livestock, supporting a small farm lifestyle that enabled them to survive hard times.

Music was a big part of every part of life. The Burton Street children sang at church and at play. In one case, a few made it all the way to Hollywood to become members of the then-famous Cabin Kids. Louise's sister, Elizabeth Conley, could have been one of them, but had too many reasons to stay home. Haywood Horne, a talented neighbor, visited the Bell and Pearson living rooms, improvising swing tunes on their pianos as couples danced in a supervised environment.

Where are the kids today? The Burton Street Community Center continues to play a big role. But as the community gets chopped up, Burton Street elders wonder whether their children and grandchildren will want to bring new life to their homes and streets. In the late 1950s, Patton Avenue was constructed, cutting through woods and burying streams and springs. Two decades later, I-240 made a path right through the Burton Street neighborhood. Now, residents are concerned that the I-26 connector planned through West Asheville will take a good part of what is left. The Asheville Connector – a multi-lane bypass – is expected to be completed in 2008 or 2009.

You look at the portraits of Louise Hudgens' grandparents and get a sense of the tradition African-Americans in Buncombe County have retained and tried to pass down. Doshia's mother, Lula Elizabeth Wilson, was known as "the mother of the hill," referring to the Hazzard Street neighborhood off of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard.

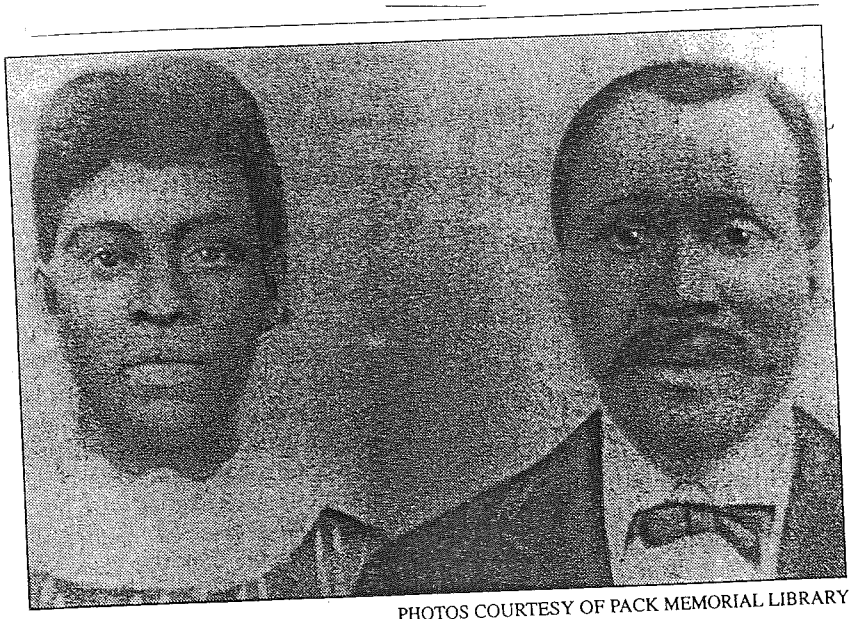
When Lasker Bell took his family to Petersburg, Va., in 1918 to take advantage of the educational opportunities at Virginia State College, Louise, 5, was left with Grandma Lizzie (Lula Elizabeth) to help her care for her father, James Parks. Parks was in his 80s, having been born in Buncombe County a generation before the Civil War.

A year later, Lasker and family returned to West Asheville, where he ardently supported children's education – bringing a piano into his home; taking his wagon to the bus stop to drive penniless children to school; sending his five children to college. Lasker's family was from Weaverville and was, on his mother's side, Weavers.

Grandma Lizzie also supported the children's education, sending over books on a regular basis. Christmas always afforded two treats: oranges and textbooks.

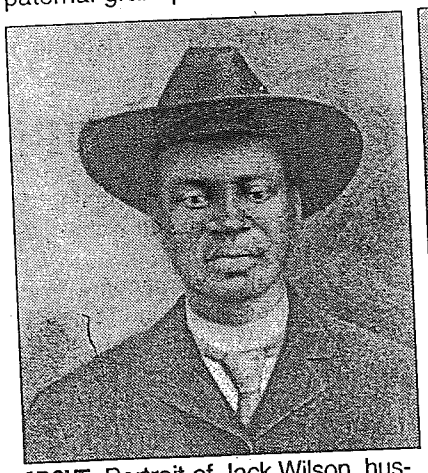
Louise became a high school science teacher in Burke County. She often left her son, Vernelle, in the care of Grandma Lizzie on Hazzard Street, and she attributes her son's considerate nature to her grandmother's example. "She was very quiet," Louise said of her. "I remember her saying: as I grow older, let me grow sweeter."

Asheville Citizen-Times May 3, 1999



PHOTOS COURTESY OF PACK MEMORIAL LIBRARY

Portrait of George Bell and Annie Louise Weaver Bell, Louise Hudgens' paternal grandparents.



ABOVE: Portrait of Jack Wilson, husband of Lula Elizabeth Parks, and grandfather of Louise Hudgens and Elizabeth Conley, who live in the Burton Street community. **RIGHT:** Portrait of Lula Elizabeth Wilson, the grandmother of Louise Hudgens. Wilson lived with her father, James Parks, on Hazzard Street when her daughter and son-in-law moved to Burton Street .

Entrepreneur who wrote several famous jingles dies

By Phil Alexander
STAFF WRITER

ASHEVILLE – Anyone who has been a resident of North Carolina for 20 years or more may remember the simple little jingle to "I Like Calling North Carolina Home," a tourism promotional campaign in the late 1970s.

Maurice Neighbors, the Asheville entrepreneur who came up with the idea that appeared on television and on car plates and T-shirts, died Friday at Oteen VA Medical Center Nursing Home. He was 73.

Neighbors was a hawker by trade, selling promotional items to such customers as the Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce under the neighbors of Neighbors Specialty Sales. He operated the business out of his Trotter Place home in West Asheville.

So it came naturally for him to market the car plates not only for the tourism campaign but also for the state bicentennial and "Welcome to North Carolina." A 1977 photo in the Asheville Times featured Neighbors with a shirt inspired from watching South Carolina tourists buy up Myrtle Beach T-shirts. "I'm bullish on Asheville, N.C.," Neighbors' shirt read.

"He was just a normal person with a lot of heart and a lot of interest in the City of Asheville," former Mayor Gene Ochsenreiter said. "He was a real nice guy, just very congenial with a plus-plus personality."

Neighbors was active in the community, receiving the Key Man Award from the Asheville Junior Chamber of Commerce, later the Jaycees. He was state chairman of the Jaycees Prisoner Rehabilitation program and served as president of the Asheville Area Tourist Association.

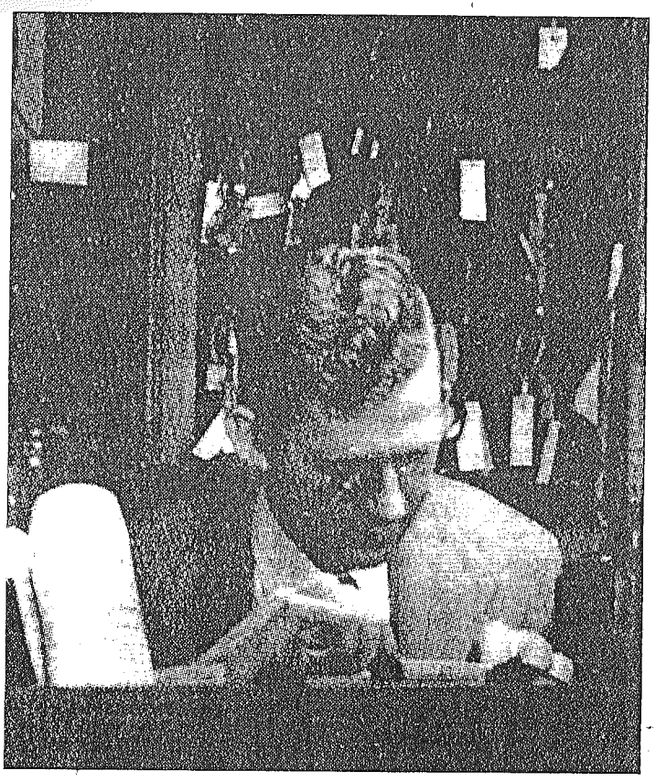
"He was just a real advocate for Asheville," said former Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce Executive Vice President Jim Ellis, who described Neighbors as a go-getter with a gentle personality. "He was aggressive and bullish, and yet I saw a real gentle side to him, too," Ellis said.

Neighbors' family, which includes a son and a daughter, will receive friends at 11 a.m. Monday at Abernethy United Methodist Church, where Neighbors was a member. The memorial service will begin at the church at 12:30 p.m., and he will be buried in Riverside Cemetery.

NEIGHBORS' PROMOTIONS

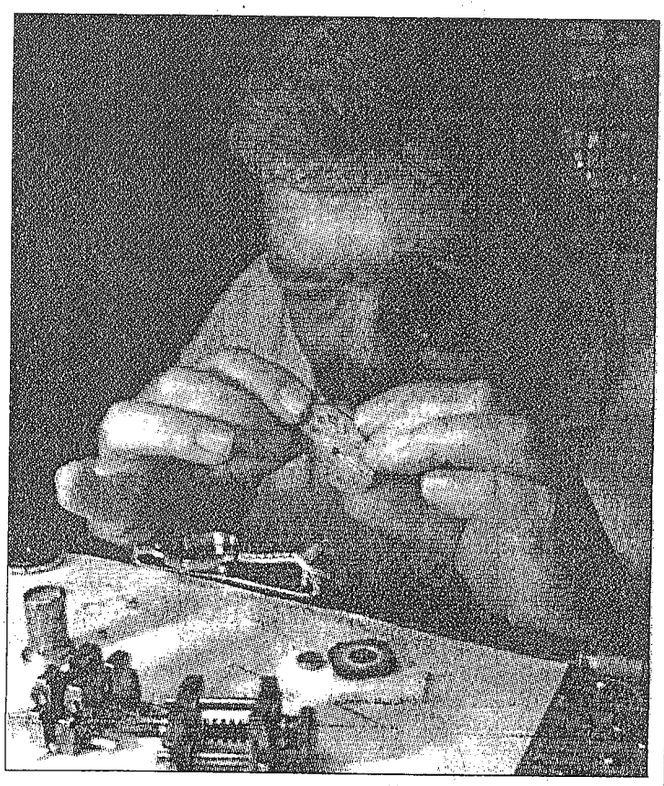
- "I Like Calling North Carolina Home"
- The North Carolina bicentennial plates
- The "Welcome to North Carolina" license plates
- The Lady in Distress (restoration of Statue of Liberty) promotion

Shopkeepers persist in West Asheville



JOHN COUTLAKIS/CITIZEN-TIMES

The late E.C. Moody, who opened Moody's Jewelers on Haywood Road in 1949, is shown in this portrait that hangs in the shop, doing the same type of work his son, Robert, continues today. Robert's son Scott, a goldsmith, also works with the family business.



JOHN COUTLAKIS/CITIZEN-TIMES

Robert Moody, a watch repairman who has continued the family business started by his father, Moody's Jewelers on Haywood Road, examines the works of a pocketwatch in his small shop, which has prospered on West Asheville's main drag for 50 years.

Tight-knit community allows small businesses to survive and thrive

By Barbara Blake
STAFF WRITER

WEST ASHEVILLE – On the morning of July 14, 1949, Nannie and Fred Thomas opened the doors of Meadows Dry Goods and Shoes on Haywood Road, a sparkling new building that would help anchor the east end of the in drag in West Asheville.

Half a century later, Nannie Thomas still opens her doors at 9 a.m. sharp every weekday morning, inviting the public to buy zippers, bobbins of thread, bib overalls and girls' flannel pajamas, vintage ladies' hats, men's nylon socks and a dizzying stock of every shoe style imaginable.

The sturdy brick building doesn't sparkle anymore, but it doesn't matter to the customers who still flock to this West Asheville landmark ere time has stood still, ger not so much for a good bargain as for a taste of the past.

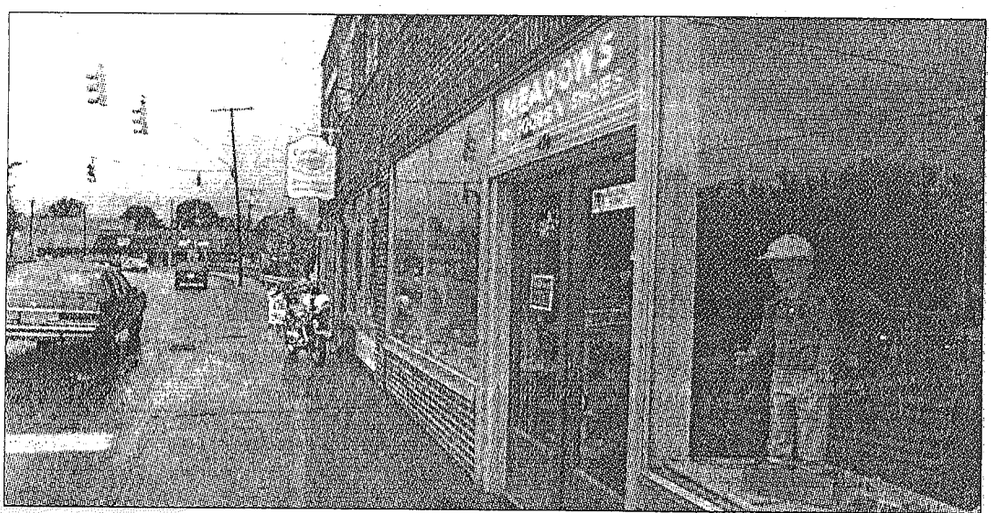
It is the past that distinguishes West Asheville from its bigger sister east of the French Broad River, where downtown Asheville has a wealth of historic buildings but cannot boast a wealth of businesses that are still operating in the same places and by the same families after 40, 50, 60 or more years.

"West Asheville has many of those small-town qualities, and it's a result of very loyal and honest proprietors and faithful and loyal customers," said Ken Betsalel, a UNCA political science professor who specializes in the dynamics of neighborhoods.

"But they're more than customers," he said. "They become special neighbors to the stores, and they're the kind of stores where, typically, one gets to know something about one's family and their deep roots in the community."

Don Russell, who operated the Friendly Grocery at the

❖ *See* **West** *on page* **A9**



JOHN COUTLAKIS/CITIZEN-TIMES

Meadows Dry Goods & Shoes at the intersection of Haywood Road and I-240, a West Asheville landmark since 1949, will celebrate the 50th anniversary of its opening on July 14.

ast personal, homey feeling

"They delivered up through the '60s," Moody said. "Old folks that couldn't get around, they'd have these boys deliver their groceries to them on their bicycles."

Betsalel said it is that true sense of caring that allows businesses like those on Haywood Road to continue thriving, and keeps their customers loyal.

"As human beings, we really need face-to-face relationships with each other, and that's what makes good communities," he said.

"The smaller establishments that you find in West Asheville, and throughout the city really, are the kinds of institutions that are built human-size – you don't get lost or have a sense of being overwhelmed," Betsalel said. "And that helps preserve a sense of local identity, which is very important in terms of the continuity of the community."

But he warned that West Asheville must take some steps to invigorate itself, or risk the loss of more businesses.

"Haywood Road is a bit like a well-worn shoe that has seen better days but still feels comfortable and can be used," Betsalel said. "I fear that unless Haywood Road invigorates and takes from the past and builds in the future, we will see more boarded-up buildings and continued flight to the malls and more suburban living.

"There has to be a comprehensive approach to urban planning that will attempt to invigorate Haywood Road, and the locals ought not to be afraid of outsiders who come in with new ideas and try to locate new businesses," he said.

Betsalel, who is a West Asheville resident himself after living in Berkeley, Calif., Boston, Springfield, Mo., and other large cities, said the community on the west side of the French Broad has suffered an unfair reputation over the years.

"It's been a reputation of a kind of unchanging, almost reactionary, closed community, resistant to new ideas and change," he said. "We've lived here five years and I haven't found that to be the case at all – there are all different kinds of people in my neighborhood, and we're having our first block party this weekend."

That's the way it is with the businesses on Haywood Road, Russell said. "We all knew each other, and we were all friends to each other," he said. "Maybe we never expressed it to each other, but we would've been there for each other if the need ever arose."

Call Barbara Blake at 232-6020 or e-mail at BBlake@CITIZEN-TIMES.com

Wednesday, June 30, 1999

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

History project seeks memorabilia

WEST ASHEVILLE – Organizers of the West Asheville History Project, sponsored by the West Asheville Branch Library on Haywood Road, are asking residents and business owners to loan or donate photographs, letters, maps, journals, club newsletters, church bulletins, school annuals, family photos and other memorabilia and keepsakes that will help piece together West Asheville's history.

The project, which began last November, will result in numerous displays on categories such as neighborhoods, businesses, churches, schools, family histories, clubs and organizations.

The keepsakes may be donated or may be loaned to the library staff for professional photocopy and quickly returned.

For information, call the library at 251-4990.

Eblen volunteers work tirelessly to help others

Pat Jobe

Heroes never stand alone.

Not golf heroes, not tennis heroes, not heroes rushing into burning buildings or down into sinking ships to save one more life, none of them act alone.

Even the random stranger who pulls the injured from a wreck hears at least one other voice saying, "You can do it."

And Asheville's Bill Murdock wants you to know he is not the hero of this piece.

There's an argument that maybe he is. You be the judge.

In 1991, he went to Biltmore Oil's Joe Eblen with a problem. He told Joe that private medical charities don't pay for many services people need when in medical crisis. For years the two men had known each other through money-raising efforts for various charities that primarily do research and some patient services. They work around high-profile diseases.

But if somebody needed a plane ticket to get to a distant hospital, if a parent needed meal money while out of town with a sick child, or dozens of other personal needs, the charities would not pay.

Bill, then a school teacher, told Joe, the local business leader, "We need a new charity."

The Eblen Foundation was incorporated in 1991 and became full-time work for Murdock in 1992. A lot of meals and plane tickets have been paid for since.

Last year, the foundation helped 8,400 families in Western North Carolina.

Murdock got a phone call one afternoon from a mama in the hospital.

"She said the nurse had given her our number. She was from Marion or Morganton. She said, 'My daughter doesn't have any socks and it's cold up here. They said you would get my daughter some socks.' I went to Wal-mart and got some socks and a few other things."

Picking up socks and a few other things marks one end of the spectrum. At the other end of the spectrum are countless flights to Pittsburgh paid for to help a young girl who needs a liver transplant.

A budget just topping a $100,000 seven years ago has grown to more than $450,000. Although the foundation administers a few small government grants, most of its money comes from private sources, from annual golf tournaments, auctions and the generosity of Western North Carolinians who have learned of the amazing love offered up by the Eblen Foundation.

"People call us and ask, 'What do you do?' We answer, 'What do you need?' " Murdock said.

When I met Murdock, he had just begun his journey with Eblen, inspired in part by a fascination with Mother Teresa and the Sisters of Charity, inspired primarily by a radical reading of the New Testament.

"Jesus said, 'I was hungry and you fed me.' He didn't say, 'I was hungry and you asked me to fill out a form,' " Murdock told a group of friends over lunch five years ago. When I reminded him of the quote, he laughed and added, "Actually we do have a form, but it's only for our records, and it's very short. We usually do it over the phone."

But the quote demonstrates an incredible, radical difference in attitude that marks the Eblen Foundation, and might be a model for other church and non-profit ministries in years to come. The difference is quite simple.

"Like Hannibal said crossing the Alps, 'We'll either find a way or we'll make a way,' " Murdock said. Or as the sign reads on the wall of the Pittsburgh Steelers' locker room, "Whatever it takes."

How different is that from the attitude of the average you and me?

It brings back to a night I walked the streets of Marion with a friend who had just gotten out of jail. We prayed and talked and laughed and walked. Finally I asked him, "What are you going to do to make the world a better place to live?"

He took a few more steps, then asked, "You mean paying taxes isn't enough?"

So, let's ask Bill Murdock. Isn't there enough government help? Don't private and public insurance programs take care of the needs of everybody who needs help? Isn't paying taxes enough?

"I don't like to say we help people who fall through the cracks. That's the way some people put it, but I think it's more like we help people are who are just like me and you, people who are maybe a day or two from needing help."

A day or two?

"Look at John Kennedy Jr. Two weeks ago he was working in his office," Murdock said.

So, in my book, Bill Murdock is a hero. He says not. He says, "The real heroes are the families. What they are willing to do, the sacrifices they are willing to make to care for a sick relative, they're the real heroes."

OK, but these are heroes who never stand alone. As long as there are people who read the New Testament and translate it in radically helpful ways, as long as there are churches and non-profit organizations willing to risk a helping hand, as long as there are Bill Murdocks and Joe Eblens and the volunteers and staff who help them, those heroes won't stand alone.

Traffic engineer says we don't need an eight-lane freeway

BY MATTHEW DICKENS

Could you imagine Patton Avenue and Interstate 240 combined into one boulevard on which you'd like to walk with your family? A lot of folks laughed at the idea, but **Walter Kulash** didn't look like he was joking when he posed the question.

Speaking to a capacity crowd gathered at the Asheville High School drama theater last month, Kulash, an Orlando-based traffic engineer, explained how the idea has already been implemented or is in the works in cities like Chattanooga, Norfolk and Milwaukee.

Kulash's presentation focused on possible alternatives to the N.C. Department of Transportation's proposed I-26 connector project. DOT wants to widen I-240 to eight lanes. But Kulash considers the state's plan unnecessary — and, in fact, more likely to increase than to reduce traffic congestion on the downtown portion of the thoroughfare.

DOT engineers, he said, would do better to focus their efforts on building longer and safer exit ramps in the Smokey Park Bridge area, and to downsize the proposed eight-lane roadway, which would connect I-26's southern portion with the soon-to-be-completed northern section.

"Being a traffic engineer used to be simple; that's why I got into it," said the bespectacled Kulash, who graduated from N.C. State and now works for a firm that specializes in designing community-friendly traffic projects. "[In the old days, when] there was congestion because we had too many cars and not enough space ... the solution was, you moved more cars by laying more pavement."

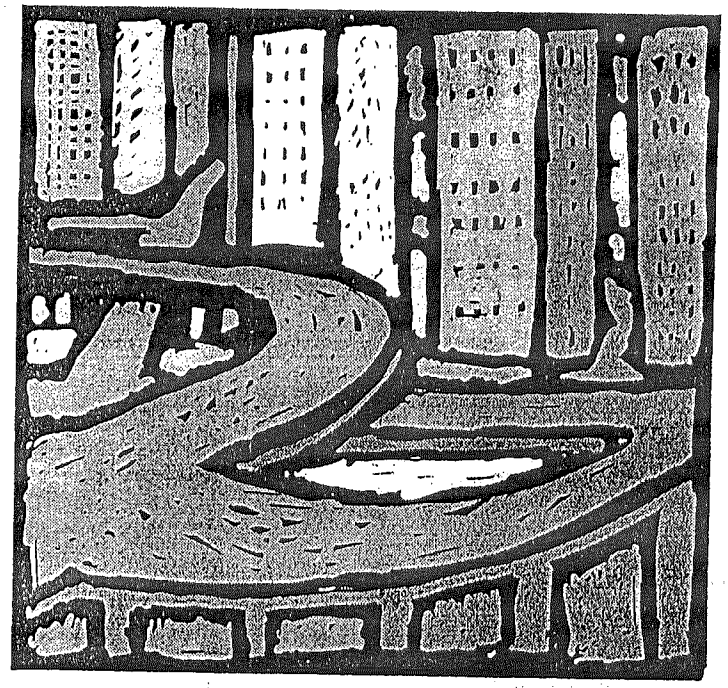
But eventually, he said, communities run out of space and are forced to build on top of existing things — such as the 106 residences and 60 businesses slated for removal to make way for the proposed connector project.

The commonly accepted idea of moving vehicles as fast as possible has been giving way to a new approach to traffic engineering, in which "traffic performance ... is balanced against other desired qualities of the street, such as its value as an address, its retail friendliness, and its role as a premier public space of the community," he said.

But Kulash, whose visit to Asheville was sponsored by opponents of DOT's plan, didn't just come armed with theories; he brought facts, which he attributed to what he called the traffic-engineer's Bible: the *Highway Capacity Manual*. He used standard text give his audience some basic traffic lessons.

If I-240 through West Asheville remained a four-lane highway (with improved entrance/exit ramps around the Smokey Park Bridge) and retained its existing posted speed limits, the traffic volume projected for 2020 would still move along fine, Kulash asserted. And at peak rush-hour times, near the Smokey Park interchange, motorists could expect only one additional minute during the course of their commute, compared to now.

But, he asked, "does traffic really have to flow freely during the peak of the day, or can it slow down to 25 to 30 mph?" Kulash explained that, contrary to popular impression, roads actually move more traffic in a given period of time when vehicles travel at slower speeds. In support of this seeming contradiction, he offered the following example: One lane of traffic, traveling at 60 mph, moves roughly 500 vehicles per hour. But the same lane, with a posted speed of 25 to 35 mph, can move up to 2,000 cars per hour. This is possible, Kulash said, because, at faster speeds, vehicles require much greater distances between them, in order to ensure sufficient braking distance.



A design incorporating lower speed limits on I-240, he said, might be a viable alternative to the eight-lane approach. Besides, he noted, when roads don't get widened, people often change their commuting habits. "People are willing to change the way they live because of road improvements," Kulash said.

And sometimes, disgruntled commuters — who were content to travel to and from their homes 20 miles away when the freeway got them to their destination in 20 minutes — decide to move back to the city, which has a useful side effect: urban revitalization.

That got Kulash's audience imagining Patton Avenue and I-240 as one continuous boulevard. Reclaiming parts of those roadways, he said, could be accomplished by modifying existing freeways — adding traffic-calming features such as landscaping, variable-width medians and on-street parking "fronted with high-value buildings." Chattanooga is converting U.S. Hwy. 27, a four-lane freeway around its downtown, into such a boulevard. "Taking back the streets," Kulash calls it.

He was quick to point out, however, that Asheville residents shouldn't expect the DOT, on its own, to implement aesthetically driven changes to its connector plans. Most state DOTs are concerned with moving traffic efficiently, he explained. But these officials are often open to communities' ideas, and are willing to incorporate them into their projects.

If the boulevard idea proves to be too drastic a change, Kulash said there are other possibilities, such as replacing existing guardrails with picket posts, and creating pathways and interesting landscaping along I-240 and its interchanges.

"You just can't expect a DOT engineer to make those suggestions; it's not his job," he cautioned, adding, "Just like we don't expect our dentist to cut our hair."

"This project is not set in stone," counseled Kulash — who, during the course of his lecture, made several references to retaining Asheville's natural beauty. "There are still opportunities for input from the community." And he encouraged people to speak up at DOT's priority-needs-list hearing, scheduled for Thursday, Dec. 9, at 7 p.m., in the Public Works Building.

For more information, call 259-5830.

AINS

B

Wednesday
Sept. 1, 1999

RiverLink: AMS extension unlikely

Group claims city will stand by greenway plan

By Keith Jarrett
STAFF WRITER

ASHEVILLE – The chairperson of RiverLink said her organization will not grant Asheville Motor Speedway another extension in the bid by track supporters to keep racing at AMS.

RiverLink, with the aid of five donors who gave a total of $1.1 million, bought AMS from Asheville businessman Roger Gregg in October 1998.

A non-profit organization that promotes development along the French Broad River, RiverLink then gave the property to Asheville City Council with the understanding that the track would be demolished and a greenway would be constructed.

Part of the gift agreement involved deed restrictions that included a provision that no more racing be held at the 33-acre Amboy Road site that sits near the French Broad River and has been home to stock-car racing since 1960.

That deed restriction was lifted for the 1999 racing season after speedway supporters asked for one more season of racing while plans were readied for a new racetrack at another location.

With plans to build a new track stalled, Asheville businessman James Young and his father Paul Young – who are leasing AMS from the city for $75,000 for this season – have said they are interested in buying AMS from the city and working with the city to include parts of a greenway while continuing to race.

Because of the deed

❖ *See* **Racing** *on page* **B6**

Brinson: City lacks funds to implement AMS change

❖ **Racing** *from page* **B1**

restrictions, any plan that includes racing beyond this season would have to be approved by RiverLink's anonymous donor who stipulated the deed restrictions be part of the agreement.

The idea to continue racing at AMS does not interest RiverLink, according to Pam Turner, the organization's chairperson.

"We made a good-faith agreement with our donors and a good-faith agreement with the city and our donors expect us and the city to abide by that agreement," Turner said Tuesday.

Asheville Parks & Recreation director Irby Brinson said there is no money available to implement a master plan for the speedway site, a plan by architect W.K. Dixon that is

That opens up the possibility that once the Youngs' agreement with the city expires on Oct. 31, the site will sit unused until the city finds the funds to build the greenway. The last race at AMS is scheduled for Sept. 17.

Even if there is a delay in constructing the greenway, Turner said her organization is not interested in granting another extension to racing supporters.

"We don't own the property, the city does," Turner said. "We expect the city to abide by the deed restrictions. That's our stand, and it's a pretty clear stand."

Asheville Mayor Leni Sitnick was part of a meeting Tuesday morning that also included James and Paul Young, City Attorney Bob Oast, City Manager Jim Westbrook and N.C. Rep. Martin Nesbitt, who

was the spokesman for Speedway '99, a group of racing supporters that collected more than 20,000 signatures on a petition that asked for a final season at AMS.

"We had preliminary discussions on what it's going to take to keep racing in this area," Sitnick said. "We're studying what potential exists to do that. At this stage we're trying to get everybody involved to work together."

The Youngs were not available for comment Tuesday, but AMS marketing director Drew Weeks said he and the Youngs are working closely with the city.

"The city is cordially helping in the effort to keep racing in Asheville for years to come," Weeks said.

Call Keith Jarrett at 232-5867 or e-mail

SATURDAY
Sept. 4, 1999

50 CENTS

AMS fans: 'What will we do now?'

The end is near as speedway runs final full card of racing on the river

By Keith Jarrett
STAFF WRITER

ASHEVILLE – On a humid Friday night of laughter and tears, racing and reminiscing, cheering for the drivers and regrets that this may never happen again, Debbie Davidson got emotional when she thought about her 2-year-old grandson Tyson Redmon.

Davidson has been coming to Asheville Motor Speedway for 40 years as a child of racing fans, a wife of a driver and a supporter of a lifestyle she loves and will miss terribly. After Friday night, the last full card of racing in six divisions at AMS before the track is scheduled to close, Davidson was trying to suspend reality.

"I just can't believe this might be the last time I come here," Davidson said as she fought back tears in the AMS infield. "I was with Tyson in the grandstands not long ago and I was thinking that he is not going to experience any of this like I did. This has been part of me for almost my entire life. What am I going to do on Friday night without my family and friends at this track?"

AMS has motorcycle races scheduled for Sept. 10 and stock car racing in three divisions on Sept. 17, the last run before the track is closed to make room for a greenway.

That angers many race fans, including Eddie Lamb of Hendersonville.

"It's pretty sad to think about but it also makes me angry. Look at all the people out here (a crowd estimated at more than 3,000)," he said. "Are that many people going to come out here every week to fly a kite or play ball?"

Complete results from Friday's racing will be available in Sunday's Citizen-Times.

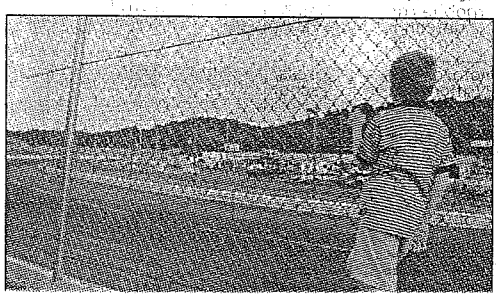
Lee Tissot defended his points title in the Late Model Division and will be remembered as the last track champion ever at AMS.

"It's special that we were abel to defend our title and it's very special to be the track champion this year," said Tissot, an Arden resident. "But I hope to God I'm not the last track champion, because that means we can't race here anymore."

Other points champions crowned Friday night included Tony Robertson (Winston Mini), Michael Player (4 Cylinder), John Clark (Street Stock), Dale Burris (Super Stock) and Brian Williams (Miller Lite Rookie).

Kevin Hyde of Fairview, a driver in the Rookie division, didn't want to accept that he might be driving for the final time around the 1/3-mile oval that opened in 1960. "I can't even think about it," he said. "My heart just won't let it go."

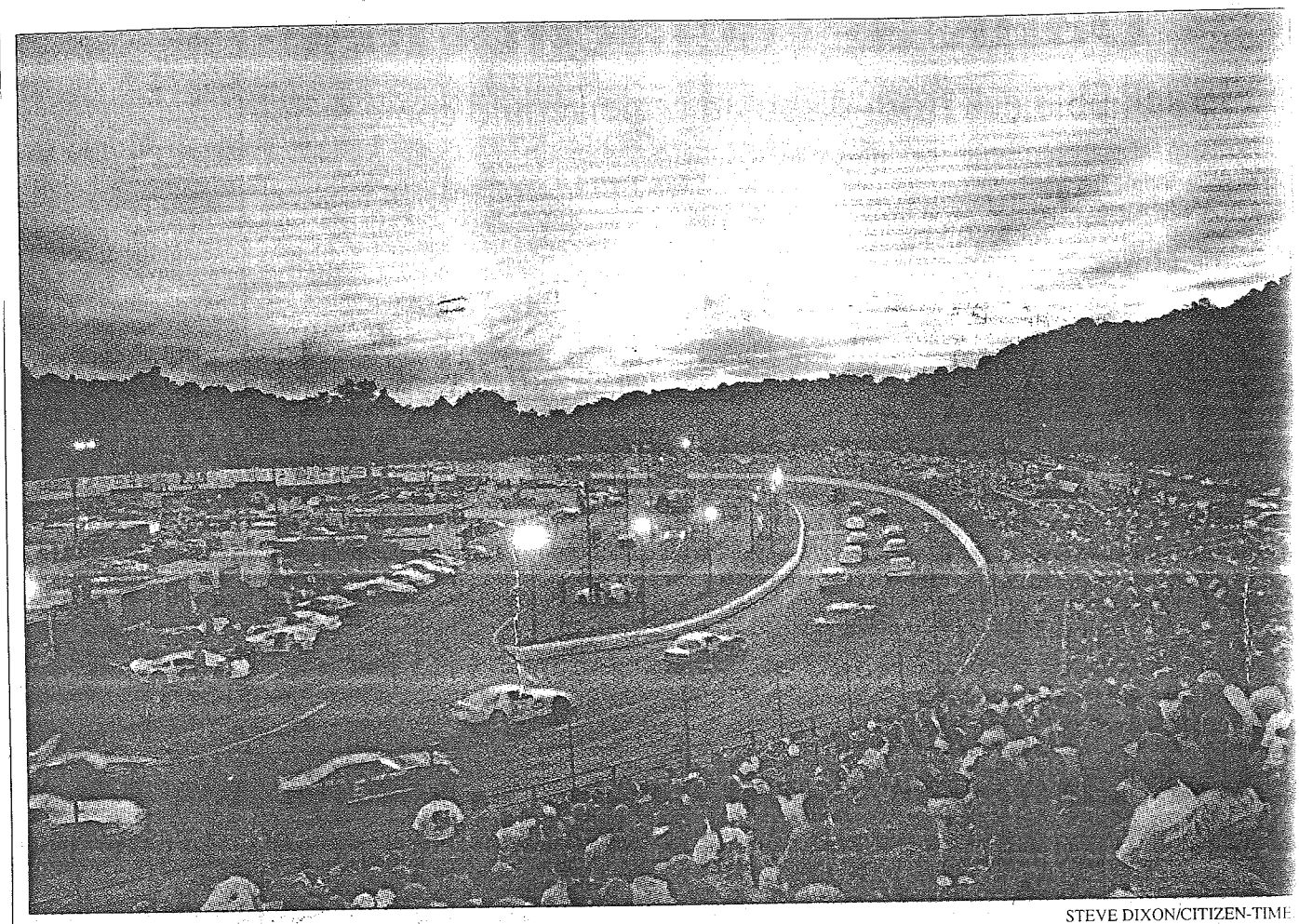
A BOY WITHOUT A TRACK?



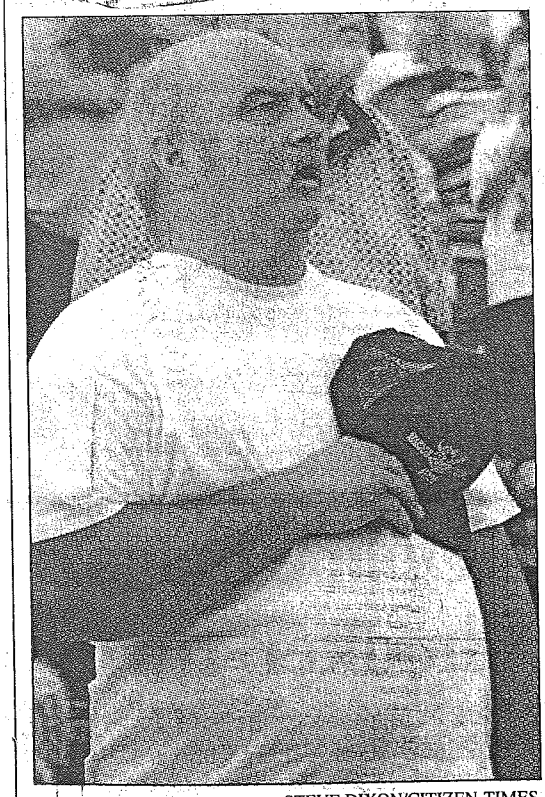
STEVE DIXON/ CITIZEN-TIMES
Six-year-old Joey Medford of Canton takes a good look at the track before racing begins

[4 Sept 1998]

Sun sets on racing at AMS



STEVE DIXON/CITIZEN-TIME



STEVE DIXON/CITIZEN-TIMES

ABOVE: The sun sets as a race begins Friday night at the Asheville Motor Speedway. There are only two more weeks of racing left at the storied track. A motorcycle race will be featured Sept. 10, and the Billy Joe Pressley memorial race will be held Sept. 17.
LEFT: Weaverville resident Thomas Burrell sings the National Anthem at the beginning of the last points racing card at the Asheville Motor Speedway Friday night.
BELOW: Long-time Asheville Motor Speedway flagman Tommy Thompson directs cars in the 4-cylinder race Friday night.
See Page D1 for the final AMS points champions.

STEVE DIXON/CITIZEN-TIME

[9 September 1999 A-7]

Point of letter: We deserve better

In my letter of August 20, the heading "No fan of racing fans" was chosen by the editor.

A regular at the track since the early 90s, I have witnessed the best in short track competition and the overwhelming generosity of racing fans.

Time and again fans have dug deep into their pockets to support worthy causes.

Drivers have filled their helmets with money for seriously sick children and to help others within the racing family.

The point of my letter was my dismay at not finding the same generosity of spirit and unique racing experience at other local tracks. Riding round Asheville Speedway, with my 80 year old mother-in-law, on a recent Saturday morning gave me an even greater appreciation for the drivers who put it all on the line every Friday night. When I read last year that the track was to close it felt like a death in the family. As a newcomer from England in 1988, I can't begin to appreciate the sense of loss all those associated with the track's 40 year history have endured this last season. We all deserve better.

David Hinton,
Asheville

[10 September 1999 A-7]

AMS is greenway for some drivers, fans

The drivers and fans would like Riverlink to know the Asheville Motor Speedway is our Greenway. This is a place where families can go together and have fun and feel safe.

The speedway is part of the river.

If the Asheville Motor Speedway is closed, who will pay taxes on the property? Who is going to have to pay to have the property protected from vandalism? Who will pay for the repairs if this happens?

After the Greenway Park is finished, who pays taxes on the property, police protection and vandalism?

If no one knows the answers, here's a thought: let the anonymous donor pay for it.

Patsy Phelps,
Leicester

ASHEVILLE CITIZEN-TIMES

SPORTS

Tissot defends crown on AMS' last full car

By Keith Jarrett
STAFF WRITER

ASHEVILLE — When the wrecking ball begins demolition of 40 years of racing history at Asheville Motor Speedway, perhaps one of the casualties will be the large sign in Victory Lane that lists all the track champions.

But dropping the checkered flag on racing at AMS can't destroy the memories for Lee Tissot.

"No matter what happens here I will always be remembered as the last track champion. That's something I'm very proud of," a beaming Tissot said Friday night in Victory Lane, just a couple of feet away from the billboard that already holds his name as the '98 champion and details the rich heritage of this track with names like Earnhardt, Ingram and Pressley.

INSIDE Friday's results. **Page E2.**

Tissot, 29, defended his Late Model points title in style with a win in the Brevard Dodge 100 on Friday night, the last points race and full card of racing ever scheduled at AMS. Points champions were crowned in all six racing divisions.

The Avery's Creek resident capped a season highlighted by a spirited three-way competition that also included Pete Silva and Charlie Brown. The three hovered around the points lead and the front of the Late Model races all season.

Silva, a Leicester resident who led the points race for most of the season, finished with seven wins but was knocked out of a possible points title with wrecks in each of the last two races.

"We had some bad luck but you have to take your hat off to Lee and his team," Silva said.

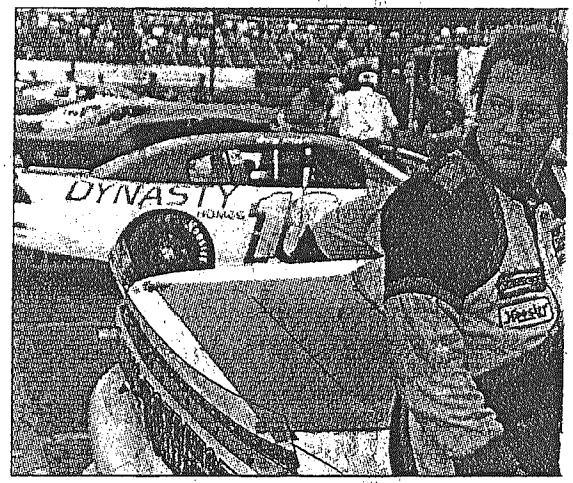
Brown, who also lives in Leicester and was selected as the division's most popular driver in a vote of the fans, won four times this season and briefly took over the points lead from Silva.

"Lee deserves the title," Brown said. "I think Lee and Pete and I gave the fans a season to remember."

With racing in Asheville facing an uncertain future, Tissot isn't sure about next year's plans.

"We've got some options; maybe racing in the All-Pro Series," Tissot said. "We hope there's racing here next year. As much as I love being the track champion, I don't want to be the last one."

Call Keith Jarrett at 232-5867 or KJarrett@CITIZEN-TIMES.com.



STEVE DIXON/CI
Lee Tissot gets ready for the last full card of AMS racin

Sunday, Sept. 5, 1999

Eliada Home picnic a treasure

Children eagerly await annual event

By Barbara Blake
STAFF WRITER

ASHEVILLE – Each year since 1924, children at Eliada Homes have counted the days leading up to a special event sponsored by a special group of friends.

On Saturday, for the 75th straight year, some 200 children and their family members once again spent a magical day at Recreation Park, wolfing down hot dogs and fixings and riding unlimited rides as part of the annual picnic sponsored by the Asheville Elks Lodge 608.

The picnic has changed over the years – it began on the Eliada campus with a handful of children and has grown to include the kids and families of Eliada's public childcare center and after-school program. But the basic idea of the picnic has not changed, according to Mitchell McCann, exalted ruler of the Elks Lodge.

"We've been doing it for a long, long time, and hopefully the families benefit from it," McCann said. "Seeing the smiles on their faces and hearing their laughter – that's why we do it. It's not for us, it's all for the kids. That's what it's all about."

Betty Owenby Maxwell, who lived at Eliada Homes from 1949 to 1957 and returned for the picnic Saturday with her grandchildren, said she remembered the anticipation of the picnic each year between the ages of 9 and 17.

"There weren't a lot of events back then that we got to participate in, and we always looked forward to it," Maxwell said. "It was like letting a bunch of kids loose in the open world – it was very exciting, and a lot of anticipation."

"We've been doing it for a long, long time, and hopefully the families benefit from it. Seeing the smiles on their faces and hearing their laughter – that's why we do it. It's not for us, it's all for the kids. That's what it's all about.

MITCHELL MCCANN
EXALTED RULER
OF THE ELKS LODGE

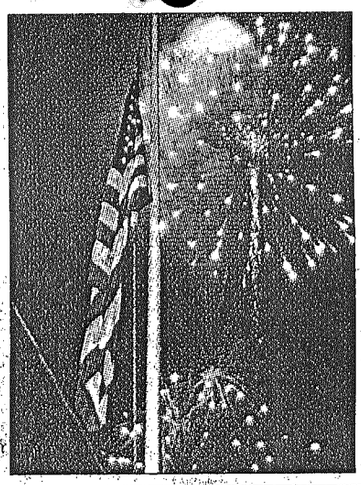
That's still the case, according to Eliada staff members and parents whose children attend the agency's child-care center.

"I think it's neat that they do this for the families," said Sunshine Stanley, who teaches toddlers at the day care. "The older kids remember it from last year, and they've been real excited."

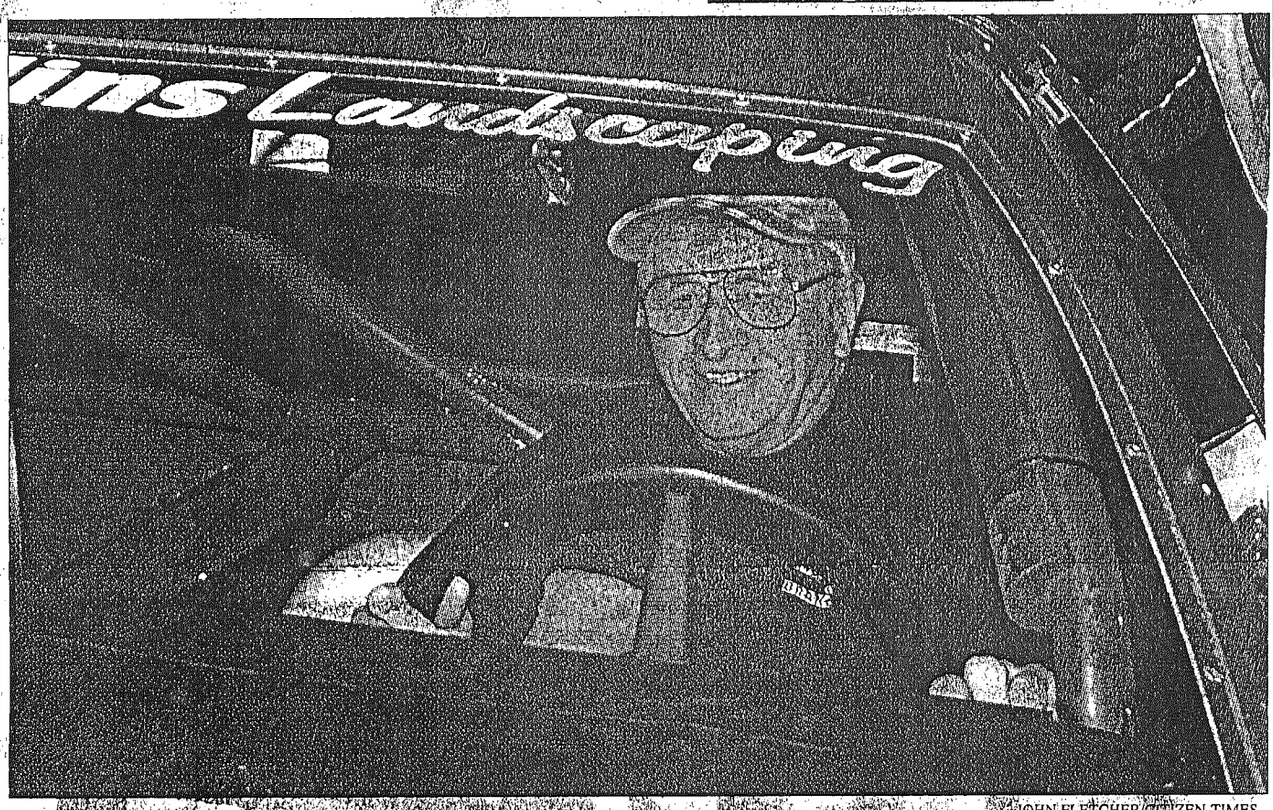
"My kids have had a great time," said Pam Watson, whose son and daughter attend Eliada's after-school program. "We really appreciate the Elks Club doing this for all these families, and I'm sure we'll be back next year."

Call Barb Blake at 232-6020 or email BBlake@CITIZENTIMES.com

Checkered flag falls on AMS



JOHN FLETCHER/ CITIZEN-TIMES
Fireworks light up the sky at Asheville Motor Speedway as the flag flies at half-mast Friday night during the last card of racing at AMS. Charlie Brown won the final Late Model race as the cars raced into the early morning hours.



JOHN FLETCHER/CITIZEN-TIMES
Bob Pressley, a record-winning driver at Asheville Motor Speedway, took a few final laps Friday night to the delight of the crowd.

Tears shed on final night as Brown wins last race

By Keith Jarrett
STAFF WRITER

ASHEVILLE – In a symbolic and fitting finish to 40 years of racing, a man with a long love affair with Asheville Motor Speedway was crowned as its final champion.

Charlie Brown, a racer at AMS for 12 years who has known the joy of winning and the tragedy of personal loss at this track, received the final checkered flag at 1:50 a.m. Saturday morning in the Billy Joe Pressley Memorial Late Model run.

"Winning the last race here means more to me than winning the points championship," said Brown, who has won numerous races at AMS and also lived through the horror of seeing his father Alvin Brown suffer a brain aneurysm at the track and later die in 1992.

"I just can't accept that this is the last time," said Brown, fighting back tears. "I thought about how winning the last race would get me looking forward to next year, and then I realized there ain't going to ever be a next year here."

A lengthy pre-race ceremony, a fireworks display and many wrecks turned a five-race card into a nearly seven-hour marathon.

The 200-lap Late Model feature was shortened to 150 laps but 14 caution flags contributed to a final race that lasted more than three hours.

Missing a city of Asheville mandated 11:30 p.m. curfew by more than two hours, AMS received an $86 citation for violating a noise ordinance, according to Asheville Police Sgt. Chris Young.

By the time Steven Gahagan became the final driver to cross the finish line, just a few hundred people remained from an original overflow crowd estimated at more than 4,000.

"I'm just tired and want to go home," said AMS promoter James Young, an Asheville businessman who hopes to build a new racetrack in time for the 2001 season. "I'm sure this will hit me Monday morning when I come to the office and realize there are no more races to prepare for.

"But this was a wonderful goodbye to the track and it was fitting that Charlie won the last race."

❖See AMS on page E10

AMS FINAL EVENTS

Scheduled events for Asheville Motor Speedway, which will close Oct. 31.

Sept. 26: A church service conducted by track chaplin Rev. Richard Bellflower at 6 p.m. Gospel singing and a religious message will be presented. No admission and no offering will be accepted.

Sept. 28: 200-lap Enduro Race, beginning at 7 p.m.

Oct. 23: A covered-dish dinner at 11 a.m. for all drivers, crew members, fans and supporters. Admission is a covered dish.

Nov. 13: AMS Banquet at Grove Park Inn. Tickets are $20 and can be purchased at the AMS office beginning Tuesday.

Asheville Citizen, Sept. 6, 1999

Brown wins final AMS race

❖ **AMS** *from page* **E1**

Young hired extra security as a precaution against possible problems with fans who may have been tempted to vent their frustrations at the track closing officially on Oct. 31 or supporters who wanted to take home souvenirs.

There was no visual evidence of problems after the race as fans lingered past 2 a.m., reluctant to leave a site many consider their second home on Friday nights in the summer.

"I don't think anybody wants to leave," said Melissa Cobb of Asheville as she huddled in a blanket to ward off the chilly morning air. "Maybe we think that if we don't leave the track can't close."

Buncombe County Sheriff's deputies who work security at AMS reported a busier than usual night, with at least 11 people ejected for rowdy behavior.

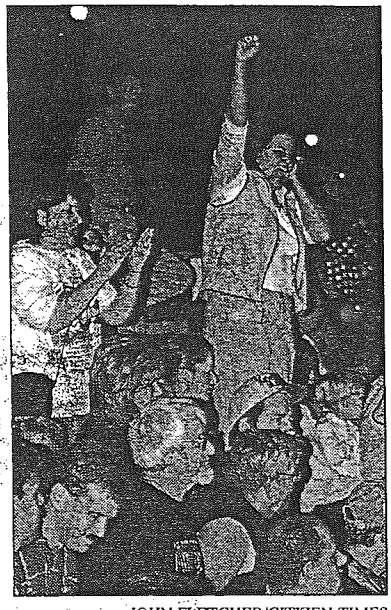
In an interesting dichotomy of the AMS culture, a night that began with a tearful prayer by track chaplain the Rev. Richard Bellflower and a soulful rendition of the gospel hymn "Will the Circle be Unbroken" by soloist Connie Weeks gave way to the emotion and passion of short-track racing.

Driver Jason Grant and an unidentified man were arrested and charged with simple affray after throwing punches at a track official in the pit area. The scuffle ensued moments after Grant was disqualified from winning the Super Stock race for using an oversized carburetor.

Brown started fifth but took the lead on lap 21 and stayed in front until a slip in lap 100 allowed 1998 and '99 track champion Lee Tissot to take over first place.

A close three-car duel between Brown, Tissot and Rusty Bryant ended on lap 126 when Brown used a slick inside move to go from third to first in a matter of seconds just before Tissot and Bryant became tangled up and wrecked.

Brown, who has been selected the Late Model Division's favorite driver in balloting by fans the past two seasons, went on to a close win over Bobby Decola. Randy Porter was third and Jeff Myers fourth, just ahead of Lloyd Slagle in fifth.



JOHN FLETCHER/CITIZEN-TIMES

Fans cheer on their favorite driver at Asheville Motor Speedway Friday night.

"I felt like it was going to take forever to finish this race," Brown said in Victory Lane. "I feel happy that I won the race, but I know I'm going to be sad tomorrow. They can build the best short track in America around here and that will be great, but it ain't ever going to be the same. I just can't believe I'll never get to run on this track again."

Call Keith Jarrett at 232-5867 or e-mail KJarrett@CITIZENTIMES.com.

Asheville Citizen Sept. 6, 1999

[30 Sept. 1999]

It's official: No racing in Asheville in 2000

By Keith Jarrett
STAFF WRITER

ASHEVILLE – What has been long rumored and expected became official on Thursday – there will be no racing in Asheville next year.

Asheville Motor Speedway promoter James Young has given up on plans to keep the track open in 2000 and is now concentrating on finding a site to build a racetrack in time for the 2001 season.

"I think it's very sad that (AMS) is closing for good," said Pat Freeman of Enka, who works in the infield concession stand and has a son who drives at the track. "I've been coming here since I was 12 years old and it's hard to imagine not coming here anymore."

When the checkered flag drops at the last scheduled race on Sept. 17, racing comes to an end at the Asheville track after 40 years. The track has provided racing fans with an outlet and has produced an illustrious history with the appearances of racing greats such as Richard Petty, Jack Ingram and Bob Pressley.

Attempts were made to build racetracks in Henderson and Haywood counties, but opposition from neighbors and/or a lack of funding has prevented a track from being ready in time for next season.

Young said he was hoping for another year at AMS, but that isn't possible.

"The problem is not the Biltmore Estate and the problem is not the city of Asheville," Young said Thursday. "The problem is with one person who doesn't want racing here. We won't be racing in Asheville next year but we're optimistic that we will be racing in 2001."

Young is referring to an anonymous donor who placed deed restrictions on the property as part of the sale of AMS from owner Roger Gregg to RiverLink in October 1998.

RiverLink, a non-profit organization that promotes development along the French Broad River, received $1.1 million in donations to purchase AMS. Biltmore Estate, one of the donors, gave $250,000 to RiverLink.

After the sale, RiverLink gave the 33-acre track on Amboy Road in West Asheville to the city with stipulations that included no more racing at the track and that a greenway would be built on the site.

The deed restriction preventing racing was lifted for the 1999 season when more than 22,000 supporters signed a petition asking for a final year of racing, and Young paid the city $75,000 to operate the track this year.

Young said the city was working with him to find a site that would not only be suitable to build a track but could withstand concerns about excessive noise that has prevented the possible construction of a new facility at other sites in WNC.

"We're going to do our homework and when we announce where we're going to build, that problem is going to be settled," Young said. "Anywhere you go there is going to be a negative impact, but we think we can overcome that."

Young declined to reveal specific sites he was looking at and said he was encouraged by the city's cooperation.

"The city has realized the value of racing and what it means to the racing community," said Young. "They city wasn't aware of that value until this sale went down, and it's been a very pleasant surprise to see them realize their mistake and to work with us to find a new site."

Call Keith Jarrett at 232-5867 or e-mail at KJarrett@CITIZEN-TIMES.com.

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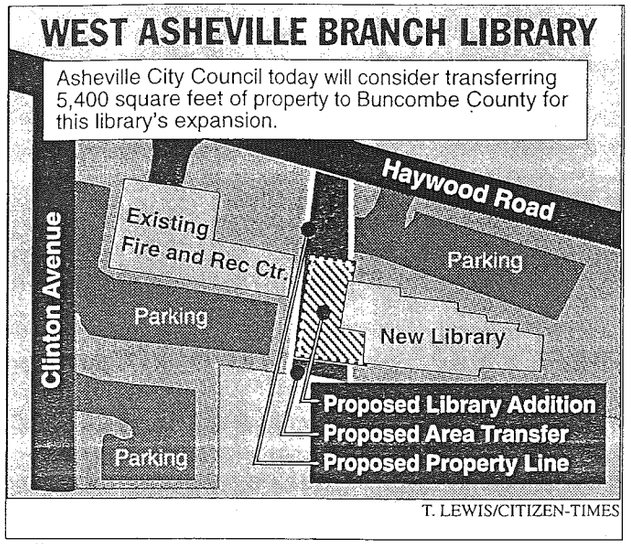
City considers transferring property to library



T. LEWIS/CITIZEN-TIMES

By Katy Hillenmeyer
STAFF WRITER

ASHEVILLE – Buncombe County's busiest branch library will move a step closer today to expanding if Asheville City Council agrees to transfer to the county 5,400 square feet of property on Haywood Road.

The property, wedged between West Asheville's former library and the new branch which opened next door in 1997, is valued at $27,000. But the city would transfer it to the county at no cost to let the new library build a 2,000-square-foot addition for cultural programs and community meetings.

Library patrons worried this spring that reading programs, concerts and other library-sponsored events would be curtailed once the Asheville Police Department moved its community resource center into the old library building at 970 Haywood Road. But the city's cooperation – plus the generosity of neighboring West Asheville Baptist Church – has allowed programs to continue through the summer.

"It's a great thing and we would be sad to see it go," West Asheville mother Madhu Schmid said of the library's programming. "I'm sure a lot of people would be very upset if there was not a place where these things could happen in this part of Asheville."

"We're very grateful to the city for donating the property, because the community really needs the space – not only for library programs but for other non-profits."

PEGGY WEAVER
LIBRARIAN

Irby Brinson, Asheville's parks and recreation director, is seeking city council's approval of the property transfer as part of a compromise with the library. Brinson also will recommend that the deed transfer require Buncombe County (which operates the library system) to return the land back to the city if the library moves or discontinues use of the property for community services.

"We would like for it to stay in public use," he said.

Since late May, when the library vacated its first-floor programs room in the former library to make way for the police department's move, adults have participated in library-sponsored programs at West Asheville Baptist. Some children's reading programs relocated to the city's recreation center, below the old library.

A five-part literary series the North Carolina Humanities Council is funding this fall, for example, might still need a home if not for the church's generosity, West Asheville branch Librarian

❖ *See* **Library** *on page* **B5**

Asheville Citizen September 14, 1999

Transfer of property to library up for discussion in City Council

❖ **Library** *from page* **B1**

Peggy Weaver said Monday. She also applauded the city's property transfer proposal.

"We're very grateful to the city for donating the property, because the community really needs the space – not only for library programs but for other non-profits," she said.

Groups including the American Association of Retired Persons and the Peace Corps also used the programs room for educational forums.

Adding a programs room to the new library, Buncombe Library Director Ed Sheary estimated, will cost about $200,000. With a $115,000 building balance from the library's construction and $50,000 from a library trust fund, Sheary and his colleagues will "have to go looking for" the remainder, he said.

"I would hope we would be able to begin construction in or around July," Sheary added.

To Schmid and other parents, the expansion means their children will enjoy more opportunities at the library to hear concerts from musicians like Billy Jonas, who performed last spring before a standing-room-only crowd.

"If you lose the option to have any kind of cultural experience, it affects the community adversely," said M.E. Bethel of Asheville, who attended Jonas' concert with her daughter Maya. "It's something that brings people together that's lacking in modern communities."

Call Katy Hillenmeyer at 232-2922 or e mail at KHillenmeyer@CITIZEN TIMES.com

Woman found dead at Malvern Hills Park

Oct. 16, 1999

STAFF REPORTS

ASHEVILLE – A woman apparently collapsed and died Friday morning while awaiting a bus at Malvern Hills Park.

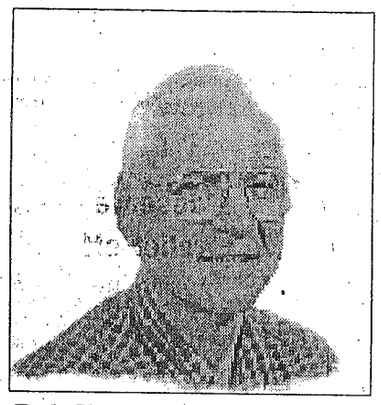
Richard Carland, district fire captain at the Haywood Road station, said a crew was dispatched at approximately 7:15 a.m. to the corner of McDade Street and Sulphur Springs Road – across a small creek from the park's swimming pool and playground – to find a 41-year-old Hispanic female dead at the scene.

Carland could not say whether the death was natural rather than foul play, but police Detective Lt. David Rutledge said Friday evening he was unaware of the incident.

Asheville Citizen October 16, 1999

ASHEVILLE CITIZEN-TIMES

October 23, 1999



Bob Terrell

COLUMNIST

World War II's end touched off city's biggest celebration

I have been watching World War II footage on the History Channel lately, and have seen several movies of the same war, and it put my mind in reverse to that evening of Aug. 14, 1945, when at 7 o'clock President Harry S. Truman, that giant among American presidents, announced that the Japanese had surrendered and the war was over.

That afternoon, I had hitchhiked from home in Jackson County to Asheville to see a baseball game between the Asheville Redistribution Station and, I believe, Moore General Hospital.

These teams had some major leaguers playing for them, notably Ron Northey of the Philadelphia Phillies and Ray Mueller of the Cincinnati Reds, and these games gave us the first chance to see major leaguers in local action since the barnstorming teams played here before the war on their way north to open the season.

An announcement was made at McCormick Field that the war had ended and a great cheer went up, but most of the folks remained to see the game.

Afterward, many wandered uptown to join in or simply to watch the celebration.

Asheville had never seen anything like it. At the end of World War I, those who came downtown to celebrate built a huge bonfire and danced around it and rang a giant bell. The claps could be heard for miles.

That night in 1945, 10,000 people teemed in the downtown streets, snake dancing, shouting, screaming, letting off all the steam they had stored up during four years of heartbreaking war.

Thirty minutes after President Truman made the announcement, Asheville was alive with revelers.

Automobile traffic had to be shut off from the downtown streets. Cars couldn't move among the snake dancers.

Uniformed fighting men were everywhere, some with many stripes and hash marks and chests full of ribbons, and they were the most joyous, for their ordeal was over.

Some servicemen started out in uniform and ended up out of them.

At the head of Patton Avenue, I saw a uniformed seaman and a pretty girl dancing about, and suddenly they disappeared into a small alleyway near the square.

Minutes later, they emerged, and he was wearing her skirt and sweater and she was clad in his sailor suit.

A burly, uniformed Asheville foot patrolman, hotfooted along Patton Avenue, leading a dancing line.

He wasn't worried about arresting anyone that night.

On Pack Square, several uniformed men climbed the Vance Monument, and one white-clad sailor sat on top of the monument, the first to reach that height.

Walking up any street, you could hear whistles and bells and occasional pistol shots.

There were soldiers in leg casts, hobbling around, dancing the best they could; there was a teary-eyed mother holding a plaque containing two gold stars, a waitress who had served her last hamburger for the evening, jitterbugging with a tough-looking Marine sergeant.

Everyone was happy; no one wore a frown, or even a very straight face.

Perhaps now, life would return to normal — and it did, but the truly battle-scarred men and women required longer to settle back down.

It was midnight when the bus left for Chattanooga, and I was on it, bound for Sylva and home after witnessing the largest celebration in the history of Asheville.

Connector controversy

Do we need an eight-lane superhighway through West Asheville? The North Carolina Department of Transportation says yes, proposing that very thing as part of ongoing construction of the I-26 Connector.

But a group of concerned citizens calling themselves the I-26 Connector Awareness Group — while recognizing the need for improvements, including building a new bridge to reduce hazardous congestion on the Smokey Park Bridge — says eight lanes are too many. They've collected close to 2,000 signatures on a Petition to Minimize I-26 Connector Destruction.

Walter Kulash — a senior traffic engineer with the Orlando, Fla.-based community-planning firm of Glatting Jackson Kercher Anglin Lopez Rinehart Inc. — agrees. Kulash, a proponent of "livable traffic" design (which balances traffic performance against environmental and community concerns) will be in Asheville on Thursday, Nov. 18 to meet with city and county planners and elected officials.

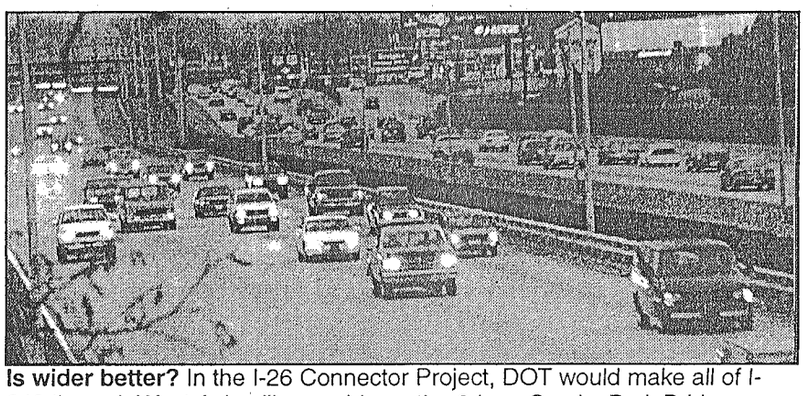


photo by Margaret Williams

Is wider better? In the I-26 Connector Project, DOT would make all of I-240 through West Asheville as wide as the 8-lane Smoky Park Bridge.

That evening, he'll present a public lecture at 7 p.m. at the Asheville High School Drama Theater.

The I-26 Connector has a long and gnarly history. In 1985, the Tennessee Department of Transportation committed to building a stretch of interstate highway that would run south from I-81, starting just north of Johnson City, to the North Carolina line. Three years later, the N.C. DOT agreed to build its portion of the connector; construction is now under way on the stretch from Sam's Gap (at the North Carolina/Tennessee state line) to Mars Hill. The controversial project entails the destruction of generations-old family farms, long-standing businesses, and even the relocation of cemeteries. This phase of the project is scheduled for completion in 2002.

Phase two of the project would run from U.S. Highway 19-23, just south of the UNCA exit, to the I-40 intersection just south of Asheville. Current plans call for building a bridge across the French Broad River (at an as-yet-undecided point in West Asheville) and widening I-240 through West Asheville to eight lanes (12 lanes in some spots, with entrance and exit ramps), at a cost projected to approach $200 million. Those plans also call for demolishing the Westgate Shopping Center, plus more than 100 residences and nearly 60 other businesses along the route.

DOT's plans are based on its traffic projections, which change periodically. One 25-year projection has some 140,000 vehicles crossing the Smokey Park Bridge every day, while another estimate holds that 90,000 vehicles will pass across the stretch of I-240 from Haywood Road to the bridge daily by the year 2020. DOT Statewide Thoroughfare Engineer **Blake Norwood** has called that number almost double what a typical four-lane highway is designed for.

An independent study by Kulash projects a maximum of 80,000 vehicles per day on that stretch of road by the year 2020 and maintains that a four- to six-lane highway — with a new bridge to alleviate the Smokey Park Bridge congestion — would be more than adequate for that number of vehicles.

And the I-26 Connector Awareness Group maintains that widening highways can actually create more traffic — and, thus, more congestion. This phenomenon — sometimes called "induced traffic" — can be seen in the case of the infamous Beltway in Washington, D.C., say group members, citing various formal studies. Connector opponents also note that, since most of the traffic congestion occurs at interchanges, adding more lanes won't help (the group also favors methods such as park-and-ride services to alleviate gridlock).

But Norwood has emphasized in the past that — even if eight lanes through West Asheville are not *immediately* crucial — given the area's current growth rate, the superhighway will become an inevitable necessity, further into the millennium. Building it now, he has pointed out, would be far less expensive and intrusive to businesses and neighborhoods than waiting several decades.

In his Nov. 18 lecture, Kulash will present alternatives to the DOT plan which, he believes, could be built in less time, would cost less, and would have minimal impact on neighborhoods and businesses.

The Connector Awareness Group notes that, since the DOT has not finalized its plans for the new highway, there is still time for citizen input. The Metropolitan Planning Organization (which helps determine DOT construction priorities) will hold a "Priority Needs List" public hearing on Thursday, Dec. 9 which will, address some aspects of the situation. Sometime next spring, the DOT plans to a hold a public hearing more specific to the project. In the meantime, citizens can voice their concerns to the newly revamped Asheville City Council and write letters to the DOT — specifically, to Secretary of Transportation **David McCoy**.

Kulash's presentation is co-sponsored by Quality Forward, Smart Growth Partners, the Coalition of Asheville Neighborhoods, the Asheville Preservation Society, the Historic Resources Commission of Asheville and Buncombe County, and the WNC Alliance.

To learn more about the I-26 Connector Awareness Group, call 281-4800, ext. 75.

— Marsha Barber

GUEST COMMENTARY

Get the real facts on cohousing issue before forming an opinion

By Seymour Meyerson

Talking to an Asheville couple at a dinner meeting recently, I identified myself as a resident/member of Westwood Cohousing Community, in West Asheville. Oh, yes, they knew about cohousing and about Westwood, they responded, because they had been reading the Citizen-Times articles about us (Nov. 5 and 10) and they proceeded to tell me their impression – which I found to be distorted – of both cohousing generally and Westwood specifically. These articles and the subsequent editorial (Nov. 13), and particularly the headlines of all three, are misleading. The folks I was talking to saw the terms "cohousing" and "affordable housing" as synonymous, and they saw the community objections to the proposed project at Virginia and Brotherton Avenue as – in the words of your Nov. 5 headline – a "cohousing furor."

Meyerson

First, the proposed project is not, as presently described, cohousing except perhaps in the gleam of somebody's eye for the future. Essential aspects of cohousing are not part of the present proposal and were not stated in your definition of cohousing: a common house with facilities for community meals, guest rooms, children's play room, mailboxes, and other shared conveniences; parking at the edge of the development, with no traffic in the residential area; resident management – and, especially, input by the future homeowners into the design of the site, common house, and dwellings.

Second, cohousing projects do not generally qualify as affordable; there is no relationship between the two concepts. Only part of a member's investment pays for the purchased house; the homeowner's undivided share of the common property accounts for the rest of the price. Thus there is no way cohousing can meet the requirements of affordable housing except with a substantial subsidy, just as with any other housing development. In fact, we tried to get a subsidy for a few of our units at Westwood, but were unsuccessful.

Third, my understanding is that the neighborhood objections to the proposal at issue center around the alleged inadequacy of the existing infrastructure for any additional housing at that site. They have nothing to do with cohousing and little, if any, with affordable housing.

Thus, putting Westwood into the controversy, despite the attractive photo of the community and three of our residents, was not relevant. There is no connection between Westwood and cohousing on the one hand, and the proposed and disputed project on the other.

The background information on cohousing, as it appears in the Citizen-Times stories and editorial, contains further inaccuracies.

The editorial says, "Cohousing is not a new idea. In fact, there are several such developments in the Asheville area, including Westwood ..." To my knowledge, while there are other kinds of planned communities here, North Carolina cohousing consists only of Westwood in Asheville and a few communities in the Triangle area – and the total number in the country is about 50, not 300 as stated in the Nov. 5 article, though many more are in various stages of planning and construction. That article says, "Legally, Westwood is incorporated as a condominium." Not so; it consists of townhouses and is incorporated as a Planned Unit Development.

My wife and I helped develop Westwood from the beginning and were among its first residents two years ago.

We find in cohousing a practical and challenging way to achieve community – something much talked about these days – in balance with privacy, which we also value highly, while enjoying the proximity of people of varying ages, background and talents.

We would like to see additional cohousing communities in Western North Carolina, but the likelihood of any such development will not be improved by inaccurate information.

Incidentally, in developing Westwood, we briefed our neighbors from the beginning and won much active support.

Meyerson lives in Asheville.

Sunday – Dec. 11, 1999

'Group saved my job and a lot of others'

JOHN FLETCHER/CITIZEN-TIMES

Simon Vazquez, left, and Pedro Florez assemble sample books of window treatments at The Sample Group plant Friday on Deaverview Road in Asheville. The Sample Group has started operating out of the 70,000 square-foot Andrex Industries Corp. facility, which was downsizing and preparing to close.

The Sample Group saves positions, adds more in county

By Luann Laubscher
STAFF WRITER

ASHEVILLE – The Sample Group, a new company that manufactures sampling books and swatches for the home furnishing industry, announced Friday it has started operations in Asheville at the Andrex Industries Corp. facility on Deaverview Road, creating 250 new jobs.

Andrex, which manufactured circular knit fabrics, was in the process of closing its Asheville plant and slowly downsizing its work force.

Not only will the new industry create 250 new jobs over the next few months, it also hired the 20 remaining Andrex employees plus some of the employees who lost their jobs at Andrex last summer, according to Greg Lundblad, vice president of manufacturing for The Sample Group.

Lundblad is one of the Andrex employees retained by The Sample Group.

"Andrex has gone from 300 plus employees five years ago with two plants operating to 20 people," Lundblad said. "This group saved my job and a lot of others. They have put new life into an old textile plant."

Andrex has been operating in Asheville for 30 years, he said.

Gary Gottdiener, president of The Sample Group, said he and partner Pat Manente created the new company after ISG Home Furnishings, the business they both worked for in New Jersey, decided to drop the product line they were in charge of.

Gottdiener was the former president of operations at ISG, and Manente was the former senior vice president. The two have more than 45 years of combined experience in the sample industry.

"Both of us did not have a whole lot of options but to start a new company," Gottdiener said Friday.

Gottdiener said they started looking at Asheville in September as a place to start the new business.

"I have family in the area and learned that the Andrex plant was closing," Gottdiener said. "We were looking for an advance labor force and felt like it was in place here. We had to move extremely quick."

Gottdiener said the Asheville Area Chamber of

❖ See **Jobs** *on page* **C3**

WORKERS WANTED

The Sample Group is a manufacturer of sampling books and swatches for the home furnishing industry. It is located at 180 Deaverview Road in Asheville in the building formerly occupied by Andrex Industries. The Sample Group is currently hiring employees from the manufacturing level, which pays above minimum wage, to management. The company plans to add 250 new jobs over the next few months. If you would like to apply for a job at The Sample Group call the Human Resources Department at 253-0445.

INSIDE State textile industry endures tough 1999. **Page C3.**

❖ **Jobs** *from page* **C1**

Commerce and the City of Asheville both played a vital role in helping them select the 70,000-square-foot Andrex facility.

"They convinced us that the Asheville area is interested in helping existing businesses and they provided us with the necessary information to make an informed decision on where to locate," Gottdiener said.

The chamber's recently formed Rapid Response Team was also instrumental in getting the new company to move to Asheville.

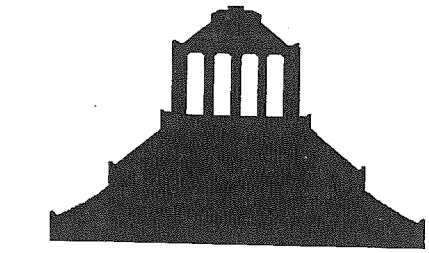
The chamber formed the Rapid Response Team in September to provide assistance to their local business visitation program. On average the chamber surveys 15 companies each month to assess growth requirements and to offer assistance in addressing obstacles that challenge potential growth.

Denise Fall, director of business and industry for the chamber, said The Sample Group is "pretty much the first success for the team."

"We've had small successes but this is the first major success," Fall said. "This bucks the recent trend of area textile plant closings. We are anxious to see them succeed and will assist them in any way possible."

Dave Porter, vice president of economic development for the chamber said, "this is what the Rapid Response Team is all about."

"Time was of the essence in making this happen for our area. Having a system in place to respond quickly helped secure this deal for Asheville," Porter said.



ASHEVILLE

DRAFT

3-19-99

ASHEVILLE CITY PLAN 2010

HAYWOOD ROAD CORRIDOR PLAN

City of Asheville, North Carolina
1999